

Jersey Beat

Issue 46

Two Dollars

Sweet Lizard Illtet

Way Too Many Reviews

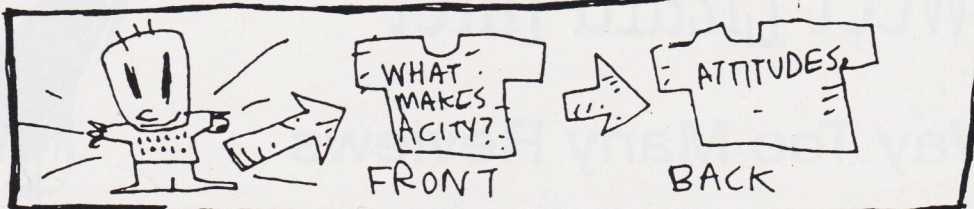
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10th Anniversary Issue!

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Jersey Beat

1982-1992



Issue No. 46

I had originally hoped to make this 10th anniversary issue a little more special than it turned out. What went wrong points up the biggest difference between the kind of music we like today, and what it was like ten years ago.

When Jersey Beat started, there were only a handful of fanzines around, and the most "alternative" magazine you could buy was CREEM, which usually had Aerosmith or Kiss on the cover. There was an enormous gulf between local bands and the major labels. The bands we wrote about didn't have managers, and if they had records out, they released them on their own labels or on small indies run by friends -- people like Lenny and Jim at Buy Our Records, or Brad Morrison at Absolute A Go Go.

Today, of course, almost any band can get signed to a major label, and when they do, an enormous wall of deadheaded dead wood corporate flunkies, management, publicity people -- is erected between the band and people like me, who want to talk about their music.

Anyway, I thought for the tenth anniversary issue, it would be nice to interview a band that started around the same time we did and is still around today. First we tried the Beastie Boys (actually, their publicity agency contacted us). Wow, would that be a hot cover or what? We're still waiting for Mike D. to call us back and set it up.

So how about the Smithereens. Those guys were doing the Dirt Club in Bloomfield, playing four sets a night of Beach Boy and Beatles covers when we met them. But it turns out Capitol Records (which actually employs some cool people) doesn't do their publicity. And the people who do never returned our calls.

Glenn Danzig? That seemed like an inspired idea, especially since we'd had Doyle and Jerry and Bobby Steele dissing the D-Man in these very pages over the last few issues. Danzig is on Def American, so we got the name of his publicity person and started calling. Long distance to California, mind you. Three calls, not one call back. So I wrote a long letter explaining all this shit and faxed it. No answer.

It's such a pleasure dealing with professionals, you know? Shit.



REVIEW POLICY

Stuff comes in the mail. We open it, we listen to it. Some of it gets reviewed; a lot of it doesn't. If this fanzine came out every month, we wouldn't have room to review everything that comes in the mail. And sometimes we even write about stuff that we go out and buy. So please note the following: We do NOT review albums received on cassette if they are available on another format; send CD's or vinyl or forget about it. We do review demo tapes and cassette-only releases, fanzines, and 7-inch records. If we review something you sent us, you will get a tearsheet. Please don't call and ask if we're going to review something, because we usually don't know and it's a fucking waste of my time (it's not like I get paid to do this, you know). From now on, any record that gets "tracked" gets dumped. We don't usually print letters because we usually don't get any, but if somebody writes a good letter, I'd certainly consider running it. Next issue sometime around September. Remember, this is a dangerous world - use condoms and sunscreen this summer and we'll see you in the Fall.

Many thanks go out to many people for making the last ten years possible. A big special thank you to Gary Welton, who did the caricature of me, and cartoonists John "Baboon Dooley" Crawford and Dave Run It; both have disappeared from our lives but we've resurrected them for this issue, for those of you who missed their work the first time around.

- Jim Testa

The HIT List

BUFFALO TOM
Let Me Come Over, CD
Beggars Banquet

Buffalo Tom finally outgrows their enormous stylistic debt to Dino Jr. (which pretty much ruined their first two lp's for me) on their third long-player, the aptly titled *Let Me Come Over*. Seems like this band is always whining or begging some girl to pay them some attention, but all that heartfelt angst is put to good use in fueling the impassioned foot-thick guitar spew thrown up by these guys. Lots of acoustic ballads too. A nice coming-of-age for this Boston-based trio; after all, how many bands can write a way cool full-throttle fuzzrocker and call it "Larry?"

POSTER CHILDREN
Daisychain Reaction
Sire

Nice of the P-Kids' new label to re-release this (Question: How can we wipe out AIDS? Answer: Put it on TwinTone), since it didn't get much play first time around. Gnarly undulating guitar mayhem with Steve Albini production that makes them sound like Television on angel dust. And anyway, Johnny Puke has an awful crush on Rose and I promised him I'd run her photo.

DRIVE LIKE JEHU
Headhunter/Cargo

Another release that came out and just sort of vanished but if you can find this anywhere, get it!! Indescribable anarchic noise-rock with innovative guitars and rhythms that'll kickstart your heart faster than your grandpa's nitro pills.

GREEN DAY
Kerplunk!
Lookout

The East Bay's poppin' fresh punks return with another lp full of goodies. "I shuffle through my mind/to see if I can find/the words I left behind/Was it just a dream/that happened long ago?/Oh well...never mind."

THE SHAMS
Quilt, CD
Matador

The casual harmonies and homespun warmth of these transplanted Southern ladies are perfect sleepytime music for the end of the day. And you can't do much better for a backup band than Robert Quine, Will Rigby, and Lenny Kaye. More songs about diners, gas stations and ice tea. Nice.

Jim Testa - Editor & Publisher

Contributing Editors - Tom Angelli, Tom Brebric, Bruce Gallanter, John Lisa, Rod Leighton, Mick Hale

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Jersey Beat

1982-1992

418 Gregory Ave Weehawken NJ 07087

Editorial

If you haven't figured it out by now, this is a special double-issue to celebrate our 10th anniversary. Half of this issue will be devoted to looking back over the last decade, and the other half will take a peek into the future, with profiles of a lot of new, young bands.

Jersey Beat isn't unique in its longevity -- Jack Rabid's *Big Takeover* and Rick Sullivan's splatter-flick zine *Gore Gazette* both celebrated their tenth birthdays a year ago -- but it's certainly rare enough in the world of zinedome for something to last this long. When you think of some of the terrific fanzines that have come and gone -- *Matter*, *Sporadic Droolings*, *Earwax*, *Away From The Pulsebeat*, *Factsheet 5* and *Splatter Effect* come immediately to mind -- what stands out is none of those zines folded for the reasons that magazines go out of business. It wasn't bankruptcy that killed them; it was burnout.

So any advice I have on how to last this long can be summed up in a few sentences: Don't get in over your head. Take a vacation now and then. Find friends you can count on to help. And most of all, keep it fun.

A lot has changed over the last ten years, that goes without saying. Our first issue was typed on a manual typewriter, the headlines were painstakingly scratched onto the layouts using press-on letters, the photos (both of them) were stripped in on an offset press, and we ran off 300 copies. Today, I type on a personal computer, download soft fonts into a laser printer for the type and headlines, and have a couple of thousand copies printed on a web press. In 1982, vinyl was the only format that mattered; eight tracks had just died out, and cassettes hadn't gained much popularity yet. Today, except for the singles, most of what we get to review comes on CD and the rest on cassettes. I can count the number of vinyl lp's I see in a month on one hand. It used to be a big event around here when someone sent us a free album in the mail. Today we get so many promos, I spend about an hour every night just going through the mail. Progress.

Jersey Beat has been the most time-consuming, frustrating, expensive and aggravating experience I've ever had. It's also been the most rewarding, fulfilling, and challenging part of my life for the last ten years. Whatever happens in the next ten years, this is going to be a part of who I am. Thanks for coming along for the ride.

- Jim Testa
May, 1992

JERSEY BEAT

IN "JACK RABID'S MID-LIFE CRISIS!"



JERSEY BEAT

The SHIT List

YO LA TENGO
"Upside-Down" EP
Alias

Most of this EP is okay, but the Supreme Court has just ruled that the 23-minute noise-jam version of "Sunsquashed" constitutes "cruel and unusual punishment."

BOND STREET CAFE
Bond Street off Broadway

Here's my contender for the worst venue in New York City: The space is claustrophobic, the p.a. makes the bands sound like they're underwater, and the band that was supposed to go on a midnight (the club told me 11:30 when I called) actually hit the stage at 3 a.m. Avoid at all costs.

DRAG RACING
Underground
Albertine

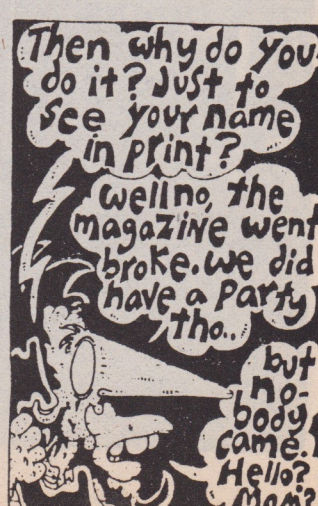
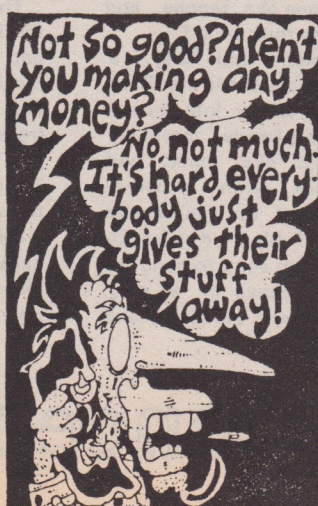
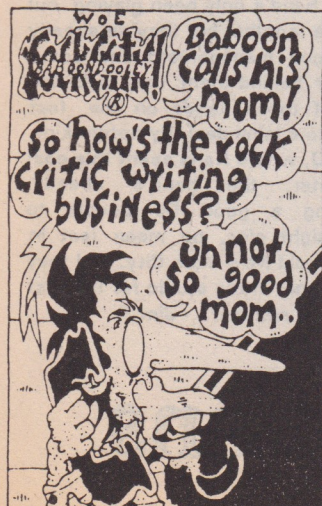
This is Big Stick, under a different name for contractual reasons, I'd guess. But it's the same noisy stupid shit they've always done, and I still don't think drag racing is a particularly deep metaphor for life.

THE BANK
Houston St. at Avenue A, NYC

Okay, here's the second worst venue in NYC. Not that it's a bad space, just that the people who book it are too cheap to advertise (and too lazy to send schedules to weeklies like East Coast Rocker or New York Press that provide free listings) so you never know who's there. Sweet Lizard Illtet says they got ripped off for \$200 there too.

SLIK TOXIK
Doin' The Nasty
Capitol

You always wonder why major label publicity guys waste long-distance phone calls on fanzines to cover this sort of commercial metal shit. Capitol in L.A. called me a total of five different times about this Canadian band and except for the fact that the lead singer looks like a male Suzi Quatro, I can't figure out why they'd even sign these assholes.



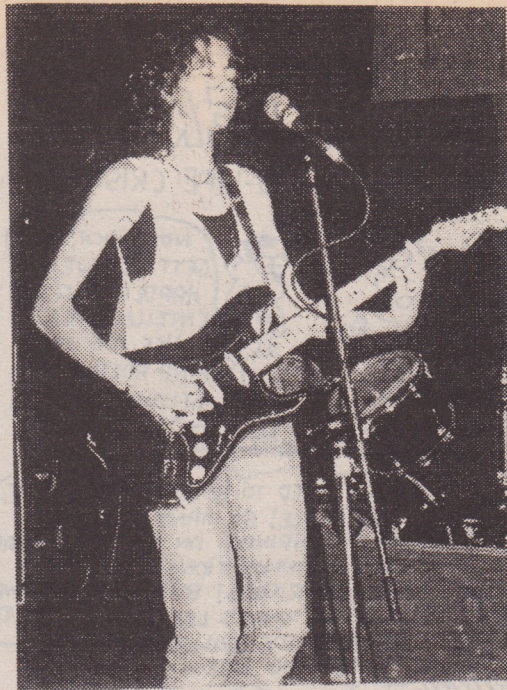
SEX POD

The hottest band in our 5th anniversary issue back in 1987, was Gut Bank, a hard-rockin' all-female trio who preceded the big 70's revival boom with a sonic boom of their own that drew heavily from the blues wail of Led Zep. Sex Pod reunites Gut Bank's lead singer/guitarist Karyn Kuhl and bassist Alice Genese, teaming them with a new drummer, Billy Loose. The result more than lives up to their name.

The sound is still heavy and hard, but updated; less Zep blues grunge, thrashier, and with an otherworldly eeriness that suggests the gals went through a Gothic phase some time back.

Loose pounds the skins with noisy fury - he's a basher, not a technician - providing ample crashing background noise for Genese's busy bass and manic backup vocals. Kuhl's guitar is all slashing chords erupting into stinging leads beneath her sensual vocals.

Kuhl and Genese have been working on Sex Pod for a while but had to take time off; first, they needed to find a drummer, and secondly, Alice had a baby boy, which occupied quite a bit of her time. Little Jesse has to be the luckiest kid in Hoboken. Heck, my mom never got on stage in hot pants and inspired a roomful of mooks to slamdance themselves into submission. - Jim T.



New Bands!



If you're a tv junkie, you might recognize Brad Kane. He's made over 100 commercials and even had his own show on the Nickelodeon cable network for a season. Not bad for an actor who's just 18 years old.

Brad brings an actor's presence and a good chunk of theatricality to his role as lead singer of the MisConceptions, one of the most intriguing new bands around right now. In fact, without him, the band might be dismissed as just another alternative rock band with a heavy jones for Jane's Addiction - four sweaty college-aged funksters who mix in some ska, reggae, and African beats to their sound.

Each show starts with "City," a weird African tribal chant that Kane says "combines all our influences." From there it's a heady, throbbing dose of rockin' ska, funk, and alternative rock, with excellent rhythm work and the impressive guitar work of Mark Kondracki. Kane moves from song to song as if they were scenes in a play, calling on different emotions and

styles to match each tune; one minute he's a spastic dancing white-boy funkateer, the next he's on his knees spilling his heart out on a searing ballad.

"People come to shows and they see you play the same songs over and over when you're a young band," Kane says. "So yeah, we try to make it a little theatrical. It's not musical theater like Madonna, but if you're listening to music with some emotion in it, you want to feel those things. We usually wind up flailing around on stage like crazy people before it's all over."

.pa

The band's only been playing out for five months, but they've already got good management and some money behind them; they look like one of those bands on the fast track to a label deal. By networking at NYU, where Kane spent this past semester, the band's already drawing a good 50 people to weeknight gigs, no mean feat in callous old New York City, and they plan to get in the studio for the first time this summer. - Jim T.

The MisConceptions

Being in the press business sure ain't all it's cracked up to be, especially when yer dealing with the majors and you're looked at as a minor. See, I think the problem is, concerning hip hop, the business just don't know the bizness, at least not the ones controlling the budget. Take a look behind the scenes at some of these labels and what do you get? White corporate America, a scene that couldn't possibly be any further from the heart of our scene. They snatch up the indy's, pimp 'em and count the dollars. They generally have club about what they're putting out, and have no idea how to pimp it. "Hip hoppers don't read! We'll only focus on radio!" Yeah, okay, radio. Do true rap fanatics really pay that much attention to the radio? No, because, okay, sure, maybe you'll catch some Naughty By Nature on there, but you gotta suffer thru an endless barrage of Color Me Badd and "When I'm With Youuuu" shlock. Who wantsta do that? Especially when your boy gots a slammin' Alpine he could hook you up with for fifty or so. I know, that's me...

So what tapes to buy? You've been burned by the hunt-and-pick method way too many times. But AH! here's the **SOURCE** (or Jersey Beat for that matter) (hint hint). These guys say Son Of Bazerk kick mad styles ove some of the phat assest production ever. I needa peep this, maybe KLUV is pumpin' 'em. Yeah, right, brother's on his way to the store, he just caughta rave.

For example, new recruits to the Hip Hop Nation can turn to us for advice on where to start. I'd say to get the **JUICE** soundtrack. With this, you can peep old school, new school, junior high (with a minimal amount of sappy joints) and get a real taste of where our world is heading. I mean, shit, they got the hottest shit going right now:

Cypress Hill, Son Of Bazerk, Naughty By Nature, Juvenile Commmitte, as well as Eric B. and Rakim, Big Daddy Kane, and EPMD, and that's just a partial listing. This is the livest, best flowing soundtrack I ever heard. I'm sure we'll be seeing a lot more from McPooh, he throws a sort fo Too Short style gangsta thang straight outta Oakland. "So You Want To Be A Gangster?" is hittin' hard down here, and I can't believe no one's thrown "Sex Money And Murder" from Pooh out yet.

Actually got a demo. No bio, no letter, nothing but a tape from Mambo Witch on Steady Beat Records, outta

Chapel Hill NC. Sorta cool metal/rap hybrid on the Hispanic tip with distorted vocals giving sort of a girly man industrial approach that I generally hate. Rhyme style on "Vida Loco" kinda comes off anti-gangster with a sort of gangster lean. Y'know, like a hardcore brother chastising the gangsters. Shit, I don't know. Track #2, "New Style," has a real white boy house/rap feel to it with rapid beats, almost too many samples, and those stupid sounding keyboards made popular by, shit, KLF I guess. Cyberfunky is what I call it. Check it out at PO Box 1186, Chapel Hill NC 27514.

Sir Mixalot's back with his third, most consistent and slammin' lp to date, "Mack Daddy" on Def American. Kinda tough to class a brother like Mix; like, what, Washington State style? What the fuck is that?

I've seen a couple of these events come & go, but this is the first one that seems to be hittin legit, with potential to last and get respect.



RAPFEST '92 promises to be a 5-day even (June 17-21) at the fabulous Cleveland City Centre Hotel, focusing on all aspects of the rap industry from the perspectives of the artists to the companies, retailers, and all other aspects of the industry. Looks to me like it's gonna be like a New Music Seminar, but with a focus. Can they pull it off? Only time will tell, time and you that is. See, the problem is the New Music Seminar has changed its dates and both events just happen to

be going down on the same weekend. I think we all know who's gonna get shafted. Me? I recomend **RAPFEST**, we gotta support the rap and fuck the hype. Could be a great place to meet if nothing else. Make it positive.

Speaking of conventions, yes, I attended South By Southwest again this year. Whew, what to do, what to do? We got a whole four acts representin' us this year. Four outta three hundred! What a shit! Alvi B. and Positive Attitude from Tucson came off like a Kid N Play that can't dance, and MCKC from Houston delivered a quick pop-rap set with a live drummer who seemed to pound the same beat the whole time. Maaaaan. Cooly Nation ripped ship up though. This all-girl rap ensemble been makin much noise around Austin for years now, but you've never heard of 'em cuz they never leave! Wasta talent if you ask me, man. NoDoz from Houston rips shit up hardcore Houston style. One of the few Houston rap groups on their own tip. I saw a couple cats from the Rap A Lot posse slinking around with 'em, so keep yer ears peeled.

Speaking of Rap A Lot, March saw the debut from Too Much Trouble, Ganksta N-I-P, Choice, Prince Johnny C, and the Terrorists. TMT, N-I-P, and the Terrorists come off like 2nd generation Geto Boys, only on their own tips. Choice, though, man, she rules.

While Hollywood baby dolls Hoes Wit Attitude and Bytches With Problems continue coming off with wack records and predictable rhymes, gettin all the props as hard and offensive Rap A Lot's finest artists, Choice has been getting overlooked like a motherfucker. Fifth Ward already dropped the hardest brothers in the industry, the Geto Boys, so why not drop the flyest sister? Oof! At bat #2 from Choice, "Stick N Moove" is the hottest, horniest, ruthlessest, most coolest back to basics rap lp so far in '92. Damn, these some of the most ruthless rhymes I've heard since back when "The Big Payback" dropped. Rap A Lot finally comes correct on the production tip with this one too, coupling their funky ass beats with prime engineering, a quality sorely lacking on previous releases. Get ready for the Rap A Lot posse to blow the fuck up this year.

I like the Terrorists too. Southpark gangstas with a Black Panther slant, keeping the lyrics serious, potent, and

focused. Not as immediately striking as, say, Paris, but strong nonetheless. A lot of rappers try and come off with the "we're pissed and not gonna take it anymore" attitude, but the Terrorists seem to mean it in a big way. Finally, a rap group confronts Guns N Roses on wax. It's about muthafuckin time, man. Get this record.

What? A rap show with no metal detectors? Wait a minute. Is this the right show? Where all the brothers? Why am I at The Vatican club in Houston? Well, if Ice T was looking to open doors to some new fans, he's sure doing it right. Ice man came off hardcore South Central style to about a thousand kids who never even seen an OG, let alone been in a hood; nevertheless, they tried their best to understand, in-between headfirst dives to the concrete and making sure their hats were on backwards. Yeah, Ice rocked, throwing jams from all the records, displaying much intensity for a surprisingly full set.

When's the last time you seen a rapper come off at a club for an hour? Shit, it's not even a half hour most of the time. Not only that, after rockin the house on the hip hop tip, the man returned to do a 40 minute set with his hardcore act, Body Count, and raised the roof way higher than any of the other commercial shlock "hardcore" acts that venue normally showcases. Sorta like the Rollins Band mixed with Living Color's funkier moments. Know what I'm sayin? Much respect due. Never knew there were so many white original gangsters in Houston. Give it up, losers.

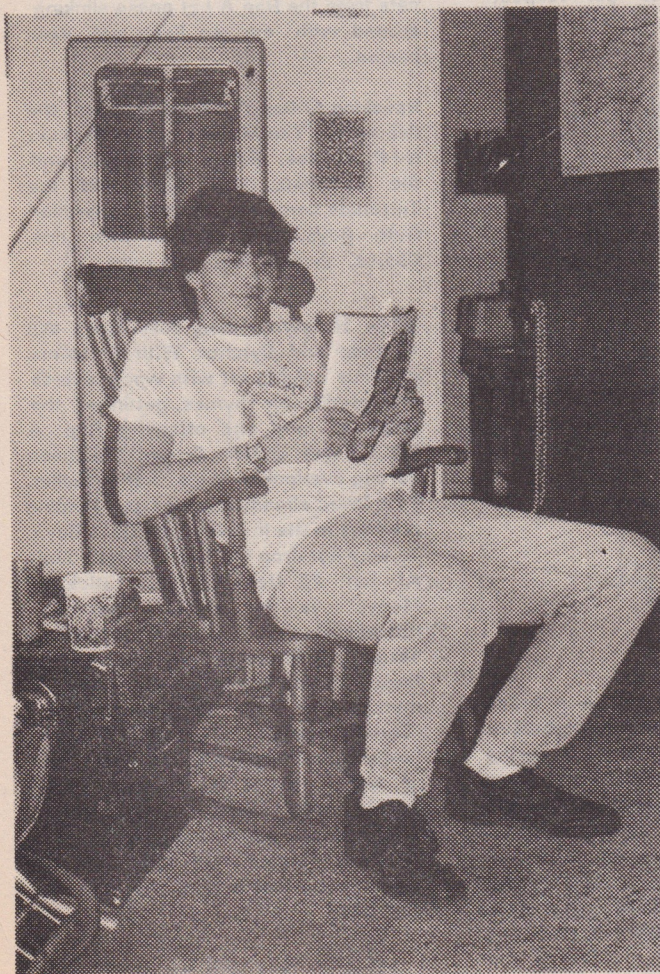
Another old school brother is back and hittin harder than ever. That's right, Mr Kris Parker aka KRS ONE and the mighty Boogie Down Productions are back with "Sex And Violence." See, KRS ONE realizes the average consumer's narrow scope and he capitalizes on it by masking knowledge rhymes under the guise of hardcore sex and violence, and mixes the two styles

like no one yet. Never the one to keep quiet, Kris espouses on one off and sellout MC's, drug dealers ("Black drug dealer, you have to wise up and organize you business so that we can rise up/if you're gonna sell crack, then don't be a fool/organize your money and open up a school"), Clarence Thomas, Colin Powell, groupies, the IRS ("Who Are The Pimps"), the media, and one of my favorites, "The Real Holy Place," where Kris discusses his views on religion ("I'm not synthetic, I'm not anti-Christian, anti-Muslim, anti-Buddhist, or anti-Semitic, but I will set it off in the Temple, cuz the real Holy Place is mental"). Deep, which is what I'm trying to say. Much respect due.

A new addition to the nation demanding respect but getting slept on hard are the Disposable Heros Of Hiphoprivy. Their Island debut, "Hippocracy Is The Greatest Luxury," adds yet another sub-section to the rap catalog, ripping the guts outta big business, ignorant Americans, gay bashing, television, the health care industry... Lead rapper Michael Frantis' multi-cultural background lends a more universal view to the whole joint, speaking to blacks, whites, Hispanics, as well as gays, Koreans, and Jews alike. Relevant lyrics, coupled with Mark Pistel's (Consolidated) crazy hype production, makes this a contender for the year's finest release.

The "Gladiator" soundtrack got a few hype tracks on it, namely from PM Dawn, Latin Science, and Pete, Rich and Serch contribute the title track as their last effort as a trio. Yep, 3rd Bass has split, with Serch and Rich steppin to the other side of the board on the production tip. Oh well, Gladiator is another example of the group's backslide, which I never really grooved to much, but it's still way on the money lyrically and those cats can hook a hook like nobody's bizness.

Lifers Group walked 'em to first bass. Organized Konfusion advanced 'em to second. Raw Fusion was that crucial hit needed to put 'em in scoring position, and Zimbabwe Legit are gonna be the cleanup hitters, putting the Hollywood Basic label over the top with their grand slam beats, biting cuts (courtesy of Mr Lawnge) and unique rhyming style, mixing English with their native tongue (literally). Is America ready? This motherfucker sure is. One minute, Z.L. be comin off over a Black Sheep typa track, and the next, they're going buckwild over some crazy hype



Mattatude

NOTES FROM THE HIP HOP NATION

tribal beats. Lotsa instrumental joints, conscientious joints, and strictly hip hop flavored joints. Take these brothers to the top and leave 'em there. Basic's done it again.

White boy funk is completely not my thing. In fact, I hate it with a passion - generally, not as a rule. Hoboken's Sweet Lizard Illtet got an lp out on Warner Bros. and I'll admit it, dese muthafukas is funky, keep a steady rhyme flow with sung/raped lyrics, and a dj that just won't quit. Destined to blow up phat in the college funk industry. You'll probably hate 'em.

Basic hip hop flavor, sprinkled over Gangstarr style beats is what you get from the debut lp from Showbiz And A.G. (short for Andre The Giant). I really groove on these party records, y'know? Something you can throw on and whoop it up, nothing too complex. Lotsa horns, scratches by DJ Premier, and a trunka funk. "Soul Clap," the first single, really deserves more adds.

Some call him the native son of the Native Tongues (De La Soul, Black Sheep, Tribe Called Quest posse). I call it revolutionary. Young persons finally have a spokesperson telling the crowds how it really is to grow up outside the

playground when they ain't jumping. I sure don't remember combing my hair all nice and tearfully lamenting the departure of every girl I ever met when I was 15. When I was 15, I was growing up, bummin smokes, painting walls, trying to score beer and diggin on my constant hardon. Chi Ali knows the time, rhymin about smokin weed, squashin beefs and getting buckwild, basically emitting the same feeling we always did -- that we were as cool as any 23 year old, fuck this 15 shit. I'm all that! He's got a voice that's a bit hard to get used to (pre pubescent) but he flows well and throws 'em over some hype beats ala' Mr Lawnge and the brothers from the Beatnuts, both of whom appear on "Age Ain't Nothin But A Number," along with Chi, Dove, Phife, and Dres. Cant touch it.

It's been a long time coming but with artists like Kid Frost, Cypress Hill and Mellow Man Ace gaining much props, Hispanic rap is finally coming into its own, and of course Houston's no sloucher. The H-town Hispanics consist of rappers MC Vogue, Fernando The Funky Colombian, and DJ Ho, stompin outta all different parts of the U.S. and culminating into one of Houston's hottest rap acts. HTH as a group have been kickin it around Texas for about 8

months, but lead rapper MC Vogue has been strugglin and strivin with his homeboys at local label G/O Records with a 12" in the works ever since. "We're about having a good time, keeping positive lyrics over heavy bass laen, danceable beats, that's what we're about. We're here to show that Hispanics can throw down, and raise a few eyebrows too." I personally admire these cats for keeping the gangsta shit and the compromising out of their game. Peace, fellas...

ENDNOTES: There's a ton of new groups out there that I completely dig, only there's only so many pages in a mag, so here's a quickie to rap this up: True Culture from NYC rock the mic on the ragamuffin tip, while keeping a strictly hip hop flavor. Das EFX sorta do the same, only different. Arrested Development got one of the freshest records out there, so fresh I can barely describe it. Look for UPS, Underground Kings, MC Rod and DJ Silk, College Boys, Three Wise Men, Manifest Destiny, Intelligent Black Minds and Pro Black Posse to blow the fuck up in '92. Also be on the lookout for a new lp from Everlast, with production by Mixmaster Muggs, he the man.

Please write, send yer demos, wax, load me down with promo shit, y'know, beg beg. Mattatude, 2425 Holly Hall #F77, Houston TX 77054.

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INTERVIEW

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Every musik is a community of some kind, and every community is established with a view to some good, for mankind always acts in order to obtain that which they think is good. But if all communities aim at some good, the danse or techno community, which is the most progressive of all and encompasses the best of the rest, aims at good in a greater degree than any other, and at the highest good.

This being stated, the musik contained herein need be all that one pay mind to. This, the post-Industrial crop; in "Deconstruction," if you will, and if you've just joined us: Welcome, yea brother, and you're beginning to see (the light...)

KODE IV, "Insane" (Kk/Cargo)

On this long-awaited third outing, San Francisco's industrial-strength duo have adapted their instrumental electronic groove to accomodate the Techno craze sweeping dance floors across the nation and beyond. With a bass-line throb similiar to thier last 12", "Scratch Attack (mit Final Cut)," there's also a Psycho-Keyboard line that's got the Techno/Rave thing going on. Three remixes of the title track (one being an "LP" mixx, can't wait!!), while the "Straight Jacket Edit" are sure to be THE dansefloor pleaser "Scratch Attack" was last year. The other other cut, "HollyestIVyear," is back to the Possessed lp's sample shenanigans of yestIVyear. Big band/Marilyn Monroe/Bogey samples all cut in and outta the mix in perfect time to the G.T.O.-ish syncopated backbeats. *****

FORCE DIMENSION, "New Funk" (Kk/Cargo)

Another (x?-)"Industrial" duo swept up in the Techno-beat, Force Dimension's latest is MEANT for the danse floor. On "New Funk," we find these lads from Holland



By Mick Hale



FATIMA MANSIONS

Photo by Michele Taylor

using that ever popular Meat Beat-ish hip-hop-on-acid swing thing to their own end, with a Gary Clail "Human Nature"-ish guitar sample to boot! The "Great Groove Mixx" adds a Manchester/housey piano to the mixx, making it scream of crossover. The "Groovy Club Remix" is much better, with even more Tek-No riffs than alotta actual "Techno." This is the best mixx for DJ types, with less vocals too. The x-tra cut in "Mockba" is sorta raga-dub-ish, fair, but kinda a let down after "Funk," actually.

INSEKT, Dreamscape (KK/Cargo) CD

Hailing from Belgium, you'd expect this electronick duo to be riding that Lords Of Acid Techno wave too, right? WRONG! True to his electronic/Industrial past, Mr Varerewijck ("the shthead") stays. "Scum" questions the motives of murder to a fragmented 242-ish beat, while "Cocaine" perhaps answers with a more constant Renegade groove. Up next, "The Punisher" kicks all over "Jesus Built Ministry's Tour Bus" with that mock/thrash beat, but where AI & Co. totally lost it with Gee-tars, Insekt do it Puppy-style -- Synth-Thrash-Core!! Alotta the rest of the CD winds down to a Noise Unit/Frontline "mood" or soundtrack-type sound, tho. Still, a worthy purchase. *** 1/2

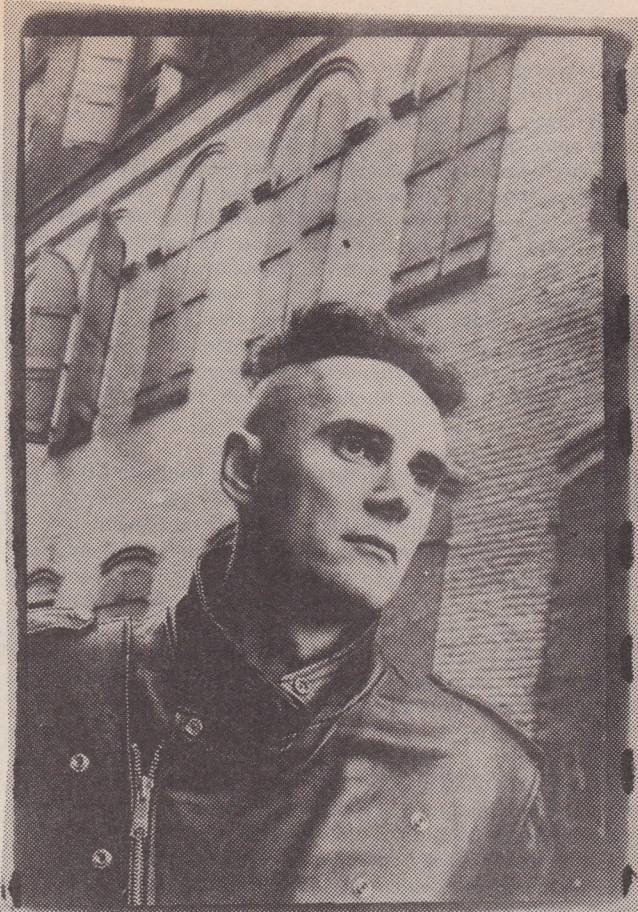
INDUSTRIAL ARTS, "6 Demon Bang" (Squid/Cargo) CD

Kicking off with their "big" single, "Power Trip," that of the sampled Zeppelin fame, this debut LP from Canada's own goes on to prove that this electro-project is more than a one-hit wonder. The soundz range from the driving, straight forward ("Coffee & Cigarettes," "Psychotic Reaction") to the eerier syncopated melodic ("Bondage" and "Sweetlittle Lies") with even anod to that "silly" electro-hardcore chug ("Braineater," which was remixed by Die Warzau). "Move To Groove," also remixed by Die Warzau, is a standout cut for its Industrial/Danse crossover appeal. ***

DIE WARZAU, Never Again (Fiction)

Some "remixes" take on such a different feel, they almost qualify as bona fide remakes, by these same artists, no less! Depeche Mode, New Order and The Shamen have all made careers out of this concept, and Die Warzau seems to be trying the same approach. This is a good thing. Especially for this Chicago duo, whose latest lp, Big Electric Metal Bass Face, was just soooo third-rate. After their totally excellent debut, and the great 12-inch remixes that followed, I was expecting more greatness, but not the lameass funk offered by said disaster. BUT getting back to this great CD single, there are six different mixes of the title track, and even tho I am a re-mix junkie, that is a BIT much! I mean, the chorus isn't THAT catchy, like say "Move Any Mountain," another overly remixed track. Regardless, there are two or three excellent versions that put the lp to shame, and I especially like the bonus live tracks not included on the vinyl. I always thought "Land Of The Free" to be one of their standout tracks. ** 1/2

CYBERFLESH CONSPIRACY, Various Artists (If It Moves)
The second compilation brought to us by Chase (of Cargo Records fame) is packaged and produced surprisingly well for such an indie outing. This CD is an above-average overall listen, altho it does have its problems that prevent it from completely fulfilling its claim to be the "harsh electronic dance" experience the cover says it is. It is, however, a good, varied "underground" sampling of bands with gothic, hardcore, industrial, and Skinny Puppy INFLUENCES.



Bill Leeb,
FRONTLINE ASSEMBLY

Photo by Michele Taylor

The Conspiracy kicks off really strong with the excellent Chem Lab track "Black Radio," off their debut EP; altho it would have been nice to have a remix, this version works just fine with its clear production, samples, and vocals that are even understandable. The Bleeding Stone's cut, "Squirm," is yet another high point, with its Euro-Beat, Frontline-ish sound. Other standout bands include Babyland and Red Red Groove, among others. A worthy addition to any collection, watch for If It Moves Vol. 3. *** 1/2

PETER MURPHY, Holy Smoke (Beggars Banquet) CD

Thanks to the sterling production of Mike Thorne (Wire, Soft Cell, Bronski Beat), this LP shines as one of Peter Murphy's better efforts to date, even considering its mellower overall tone. "Low Room," with its discordant guitar riff and radical vocal approach, might even win back the most jaded Bauhaus fan, while on "Kill The Hate," Peter's voice does sitar-like backflips over the looped bass line and Eastern tom-tom/guitar interplay. "Dream Gone By" is my pick hit though, with its Bowie-isms throughout. ****

FATIMA MANSIONS, "Tima Mansio' Dumps The Dead" (Radioactive) EP

"Here we fuckin' gooooooooooo!"

While this is supposedly the single for "Only Losers Take The Bus," this track, be it a "nice" little Hoodoo Guru-like rant, pales in comparison to the bonus cuts (all 9, count 'em, NINE of them) (well, some of them, anyway). Like their brilliant cover of Ministry's "Stigmata," which they

didn't change much, and the even better dis/cover of REM's (yep!) "Shining Happy People." First of all, there's a hip-hoppy drum program for the verse which has raps about some of the "ills" of society, like, "Pardon me/when you shoot up, dear/don't spew up, dear/in baby's face, dear/mass murder, innocent people lost their lives/and killers profit/...government profit queens/making it a crime to be gay." More lines like "Fuck you advertising and show biz/but most of all, fuck your show business" make this a class track worth owning. I just hope those "alternative" gods REM get to hear this lovely cover version, esp that "Go fuck yourself" sample. Also included we find the excellent "Chemical Cosh" from the Viva lp, as well as some mellow Hitchcock (Robyn, that is) tracks. ****

FLOWERED UP, A Life With Brian (Beggars Banquet) CD
 yeah, what's Flowered Up doing here? Well...they're worth a mention if only for the EX-cellent house piano of "Take It" and the singer's completely Cockney accent. This is London's answer to all that Manchester shit, and much better, being its rawer and has a lot less of that annoying wah-wah guitar. And while, yes, some of it gets too 6T's poppy, it's perhaps the best of that current crop. Happy Mondays, Stone Roses, Lush, Blur, Soup Dragons are all DEAD and buried, long live Flowered Up!
 ** 1/2

BABYLAND - 12" (Flipside)

Having read more than one favorable review of this L.A. duo, I was pleased to find this debut lump of wax at my door. Despite the icky cover art (a very hairy hippie), the sounds contained within are a pretty good take on the "Industrial" sound. Electronic purists, the only "acoustic" sounds are the vocals and metal hits. The vocals, with their "last scream before death" tone, remind me a lot of Batz Without Flesh, or even Chem Lab. My only complaint is that EVERY song goes into that thrash/up-tempo beat, whether it fits or not. "Smrow-Toh," the best cut, could've been a good crossover industrial/danse number had it not been for the awkward thrash breaks and tempo chnges. Oh well, it's a good first outing, and who knows, maybe they'll do some danse-able remixes. ** 1/2

DELERIUM, Euphoric (Third Mind/Roadracer) CD
WILL, Pearl Of Great Price (Third Mind/Roadracer) CD
 Thanks to a new deal between the UK industrial/danse oriented label Third Mind and New York City's own Roadracer Records, we've got the domestic availability of these two excellent Frontline Assembly offshoots. While this is the debut release from Will (recorded between '87-'90), it marks Delerium's fifth (the previous four lp's are available through Germany's Dossier label, who released the first two Frontline lp's.) And to use Frontline as a musical reference point, who wouldn't? Delerium is like a stripped-down, instrumental version, while Will is more of an "acoustic"/gothic-classical project on a grand scale, with vocal interpretations. Kinda-sorta. The militaristic snare rolls bring up a certain Euro sound (ala' Laibach) and make Will my pick of the two. Do see!!!
 Delerium ***/Will *****

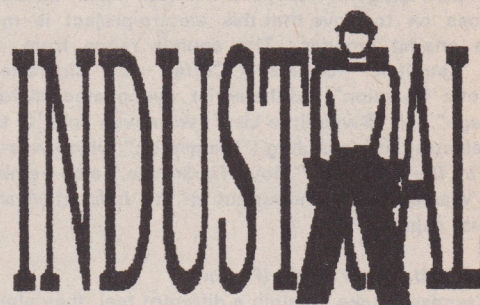
MACHINES OF LOVING GRACE, "Burnt Like Brilliant Trash" (Mammoth)
 "Re-produced by Trent Reznor." And I thought NIN was bad. Now this! HATED IT!

FRONTLINE ASSEMBLY, Tactical Neural Implant (Third Mind/Roadracer)

And speaking of Frontline Assembly, this new album finds Bill and Rhys coasting right along, almost as if on autopilot. And while that description might sound negative, it's not. Frontline Assembly are just so damn good at that they do, and have been at it (and more importantly, STUCK at it) for such a long time, it sorta sounds like they don't have to try too hard to impress. While other "Industrial" forefathers like Ministry and Skinny Puppy seem to have run out of ideas and felt the need to cross over to the Thrash deep end, Frontline remains pure to that highly-sequenced, Euro-beat "eerie" sound that was originally so appealing about all those bands, and this genre in general. *****

SKINNY PUPPY, Last Rights Network (Capitol)

is it, could it be? Puppy's "last?" If you imagine all their other LP's (excluding Too Bad Park) as really bad dreams, Last Rights is a nightmare!! The good news is they've ditched the acoustic drum sound of Dark Park and the cut "Inquisition" even hints at the vintage Puppy sound!!! The bad news is that the production's almost as much the mess as that previous (Park) effort. "Lust Chance" is great, though, sounds to me like Moby covering the Twin Peaks theme (on acid, of course). ***



DANSE ASSEMBLY TOP TWELVE (at The Roxy, New Brunswick, every Thursday)

1. APOTHEOSIS - "O Fortuna"
2. TAINTED CASH - "Tainted" '91 remix
3. MEAT BEAT MANIFESTO - "Now"/"Psyche Out"
4. CABARET VOLTAIRE - "Colours"
5. L.A. STYLE - "James Brown Is Dead"
6. KMFD - "Vogue"/"Sex Flag"
7. DREAM FREQUENCY - "Prodigy" remix
8. SHAMEN - "Make It Mine" remix
9. FORCE DIMENSION - "New Funk"
10. DEPECHE MODE - "Strangelove" remix
11. T-99 - "Gardiack" remix
12. FRONTLINE ASSEMBLY - "Iceolate"

That 'all do it. Another issue, another column. Sorry we missed you all last time, we were suffering from a massive case of Nirvanaitis, which has symptoms including major disgust with 3-chord sloppy garage-pop pseudo-anthems churned out by slub-pop groups emanating from Seattle like a cancerous growth encouraging the musik community to regress as opposed to PROGRESS, forward, onward, I'm outta here...

P.S. Nevermind. NOT!!!



Chillin' with the Sweet Lizard Illtet

by Jim Testa

The Time-Warner Building at 75 Rockefeller Plaza houses one of the most powerful communications conglomerates in the world, home to everything from the Warner-Elektra-Asylum family of record labels to Time magazine to Superman comic books. As I pick up my visitor's pass in the lobby, the receptionists are buzzing with excitement and want to know if I'm there to interview Chaka Khan, who's due any minute. No such luck. This just isn't the kind of place where you expect to find the Sweet Lizard Illtet.

Mike Kilmer and Emilio China are the mainspring of the Illtet, scruffy hippie-punks who literally grew up on the streets of Hoboken. They're the kind of best buds who have been together so long, they finish each others' sentences without realizing it. Although they've been making music together since they were big enough to hold a guitar, it wasn't until after high school and a year at the New England Conservatory of Music that the boys returned to Hoboken and got serious about starting a band.

The Illtet actually started in Boston, while Mike and Emilio were in school. But it wasn't until they had returned to Hoboken that things got serious. Emilio does most of the singing, plays some guitar, and enlivens a few tunes with his electric violin, which looks like some kind of Star Trek deathray. Mike adds his own vocals and raps and handles the bass.



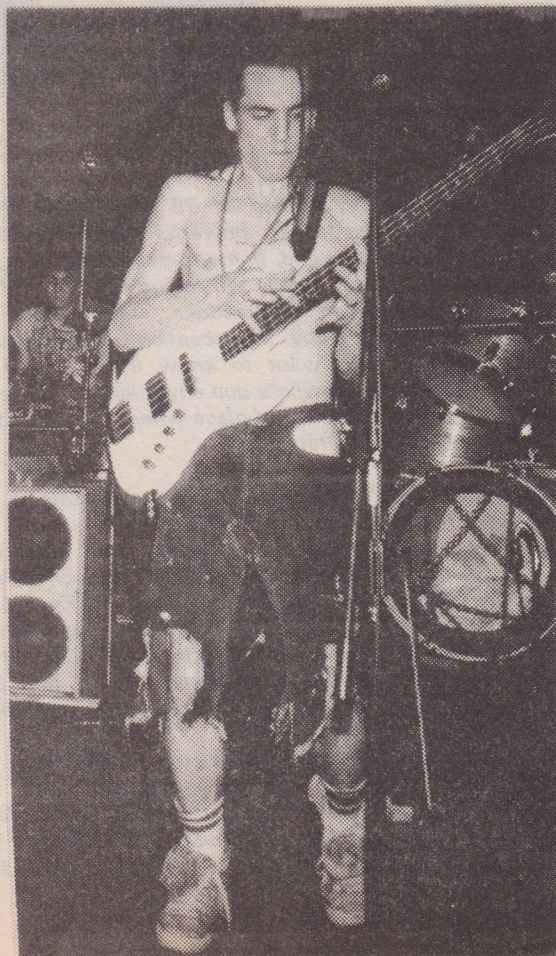
Wylie Wirth, a pal from their student days in Boston, came aboard to develop the band's complicated system of integrating percussion with sampled effects. Drummer Mike Shockley, who had been playing with local noisemeisters Ritual Tension, and guitarist Boo Reiners completed the lineup.

The group began playing at Boo Boo's, a small jazz space in Hoboken, but was soon headlining (and selling out) larger venues, especially Live Tonight!, where they built a loyal local following. After Glenn Morrow and Tom Prendergast of Hoboken's Bar None Records signed the band to their new management company, a major label bidding war began and the Warner Brothers deal followed.

It's been over a year since the Illtet announced they had signed to Warner Brothers, and Hoboken's most talked-about new band finally have a record out. Just about two years behind schedule.

Some of this conversation took place in the Warner Bros. offices, the rest a few nights later over dinner at Maxwells. I don't usually take punk bands out to dinner, but these guys needed a free hot meal in the worst way. Being on a major label isn't everything it's cracked up to be.

Photo by Jim Testa



Q: So what's on the agenda now that the record is out?

Emilio: First off, the whole band's going away on vacation. We're gonna take a little time off, kick back, and wait for the record to come out.

Q: Has anybody at Warner Bros. said anything about getting you guys out on the road?

Emilio: Hopefully we'll get on a tour soon. It's really hard to hook up with a big tour, so maybe we'll do our own tour. Hopefully, by July we'll be on the road, because we're starting to get serious cabin fever. We were having that a year ago, and now it's just like, GET ME THE FUCK OUT OF HOBOKEN.

Q: It must be a relief to finally have the album out. Do you regret waiting this long to release your first album?

Mike: Not really. The big difference is the facilities we had to record. We had money, a lot of money, that let us make the record we wanted to make.

Emilio: The other thing is you have to spend some time getting your business skills together. If we were on an indie, we would have put out two albums by now. But we didn't. We regret that a little, but we have access to so much now.

Q: Well, here you are, a couple of white guys who play funk and rap, and your record is coming out the same week as the new Beastie Boys album. Does that bother you?

Mike: Hey, man, if it wasn't that, it'd be the same week as the Chili Peppers, or Faith No More, or Urban Dance Squad. Two years ago, we were like, man, we gotta get this record out right away. At this point, fuck it, man. It is what it is.

Emilio: Hopefully we'll get on the Beastie Boys tour, that's where we're at. We gotta connect with somebody like that.

Mike: We used to hate those guys. When "Fight For Your Right To Party" came out.

Emilio: When that came out, me and this guy were doing rap music, pretty much straight up, and people would hear us and go, ah, that's just like the Beastie Boys! And we hated them because they took rap music and made it pop. But since then, I think they've made two really brilliant albums. I think the new record they just put out is amazing.

SWEET LIZARD ILLTET

Q: Any talk about a video to support the lp yet?

Emilio: We don't know what song we want to do yet, to spend the money on. Because they have these different packages, and we want to be a little conservative with that. But hopefully we're going to figure out how to get some video equipment and make our own video.

Mike: I hope we can get on MTV, but if not... we have plenty of time.

Q: One thing I wanted to ask you about was that last show at Maxwells, you did a song about marijuana and lit up a bunch of joints and passed them around... Is that like a big thing with you now?

Emilio (laughing): That was "School Of Fish." That's not even what that song is about.

Mike: It's really like an acid jam. Actually it was more of an acid trip when we wrote it. We were tripping with these two women and they were drawing all these fish with our friends' faces on them. Like the Mike fish, the Boo fish... And Emilio just started rapping on that whole scene and that's how we came up with the song.

Emilio: When we were going the song at Maxwells, these friends of ours, the guys from Arrogant Response, they're totally into Cypress Hill, and they got that joint thing started, and it kind of went from there.

Mike: We definitely want to make some kind of statement, but we don't want to screw things up too much.

Emilio: Our A&R guy, we told him about that and he told us to never try that shit south of D.C. or we'd get arrested. So, you know, we do believe in all that, but it's not like we're going to light up joints at every show. We might be playing at this march in Washington Square Park for NORML though.

Q: One thing about the set you do, I've been hearing most of those songs for two years. You guys are pretty slow about adding new songs, no?

Emilio: We have a lot of material, it's just that you have to work it into the set, teach it to the rest of the band. And we've been trying to get a record deal, trying to do this and do that...

Mike: Just trying to live day to day.

Emilio: That's the thing about being on a major label. Everything takes so long and gets so involved. You spend so much of your time just taking care of shit.

Mike: Also our material is so hard to play. We rehearse two or three times a week just to keep ourselves in shape to play the set we do now. We do segues, that's our creative outlet. They're easy and we can work them up in a day or two.



Emilio: We try to work up a new instrumental jam for every show, too. When we rehearse, the five of us come up with something. And we have added some songs. We added three songs when we did the album. And we're also working on bits and pieces, writing new instrumental stuff.

Mike: It is a concern. I wish we had time to write new material. And we have all these cool cover tunes we want to do too.

Q: Maybe once you get on tour and you're playing five nights a week, you'll be able to work out all that new stuff.

Mike: That's what we're thinking. And anyway, it's not like we're on this singer/songwriter trip. It's not like one of us comes in to practice with three new chords and teaches the song to the band.

Emilio: But hey, we might do that too. If it works...why not?

Q: I really like the fact that you've captured the energy and spontaneity of your live show on the album. When you took so long recording it, I was really afraid it'd be overproduced.

Mike: Shit, man, we've been working at Water Music since we were 15. So a lot of it we knew already. We co-produced it, Rob Grenoble produced some of it and we produced some of it ourselves. 'Cos we work real different. Rob is real meticulous and we like to work real loose.

Some of it was getting down the live sound, and some of it was getting into using the computers and the sequencers and shit like that, and not being afraid of that shit. Layne (ex-Water Music engineer) turned us on to that Sly And The Family Stone record, "There's A Riot Goin' On," right before we started recording. That was so loose, and yet it totally comes across. We heard that record and we just said, word, this is it. That album was really inspirational to us.

Emilio: Some of the tunes we played with a real party vibe, just come into the studio and play the shit. And some tunes, we got real into the cyber trip, the computers and all that.

Q: Can you really make an album with digital samples and make it sound funky?

Mike: It's like, Public Enemy uses only samples, and yet that shit sounds crazy raw. It doesn't really sound like computers. So that's what we're going for.

SWEETLIZARD TILTED

Emilio: We got this studio set up now where we live, we got all this equipment and shit. So we sit in our studio and play with samples and stuff. Not samples so much as we're making these loops and shit... So it's real possible that the next album will be a lot more into that kind of thing.

Q: Have you been laying down any tracks for new songs yet?

Emilio: We haven't even recorded the whole band there yet. Right now we got the Swales in there, they're making a single and Gene Holder (ex-dBs) is producing. And the Selves are gonna record in there. But us...

Mike: We spend a lot of time cleaning it, and picking up shit. And setting up the equipment and keeping track of everything. Man, it's like almost a day just to set all the shit up.



PERCOLATER, the fourth studio LP from ALL, could only be recorded by a band that lives, works and breathes the credo ALL OR NOTHING'. ALL erupted five years ago from the rubble of the DESCENDENTS and BLACK FLAG with a So Cal based pop-core guitar, bass and drum jolt. In their quest for the "total extent," ALL lived and played together in the same Lomita, CA living/office space until 1990 when they relocated to a four bedroom affordable house in Brookfield, MO. Being in the middle of the U.S. enables ALL to support their eight month a year touring habit, and they get some quality fishing done in Brookfield Lake as well. On **PERCOLATER**, ALL blends hard playing and heavy hitting with the band's knack for writing memorable songs, served up in a straightforward, highly developed musical attack. CRZ 022 (LP/CA/CD)

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CHEMICAL PEOPLE
CHEMICAL PEOPLE by **CHEMICAL PEOPLE** isn't what anyone would expect from these graduates of Beverly Hills High, simply based on the four albums and one EP they've released over the past four years. Sure the TV show, Beverly Hills 90210, has made their High School famous but the **CHEMICAL PEOPLE** party and play much harder, faster and amped-up beyond what any network censor would permit. A key to the Chems crunch is drummer/vocalist Dave Naz and on **CHEMICAL PEOPLE**, he takes over on guitar to turn up the female magnet potential. Ed Ulrik anchors down their hard pop sound with rivet-gun shots of his bass.

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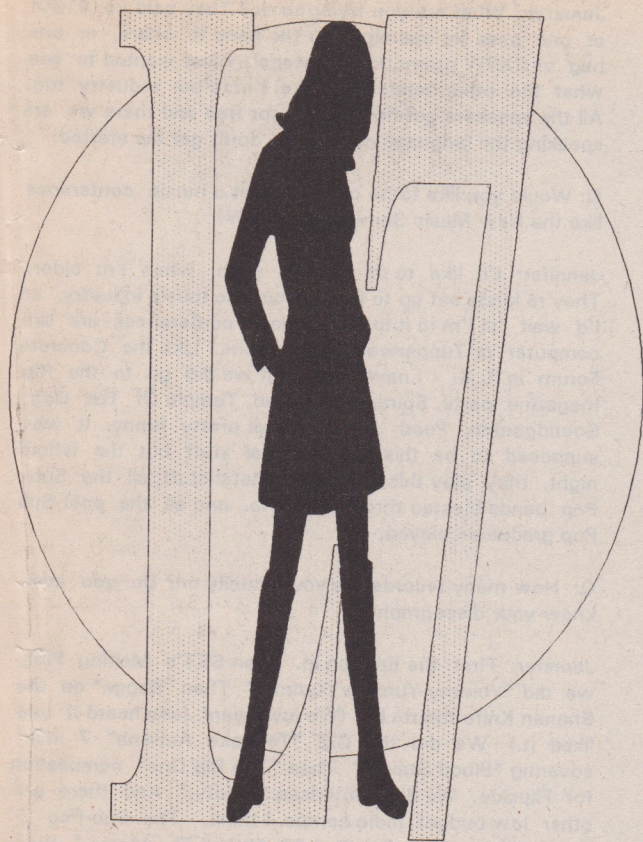
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Frank Phobia takes a ride with the hottest babes in foxcore

Photos by Michele Taylor

by Frank Phobia

I have a thing for girls with guitars. Yes, yes, I love Joan Jett, the Go Go's, and I even have a soft spot for the Bangles. I love Babes In Toyland, Shonen Knife, Dickless, the Lunachicks... but none compare to L7. In my book, it doesn't even matter that the members of L7 are women. They rock me... period.

I've known Jennifer Finch since 1988. We have mutual friends in Philadelphia and our paths have crossed a few times a year via mail, phone, or at shows. I am truly excited and happy for these four wonderful people and everything their promising future holds for them. They deserve every ounce of attention they're getting now. They've trekked across America three times and permanently scared Europe too. They've had to fight to be taken seriously and even had a few mishaps like cranes falling from the sky on their head.

Suzi wound up with a broken bone in her face and a morbid fear of being moshed into by the crowd -- complicated by slipshod stage management at several shows, notably the packed showcase at Austin's South By Southwest conference in March, when members of other bands had to rush on stage and protect her because the club didn't provide any security. More recently, on their way to a gig in D.C. (via a stopover in my hometown in Reading) the band's van went skidding across an icy bridge and came within inches of plummeting over the edge.

But now, with the release of Bricks Are Heavy on Slash Records, L7 are bona fide major label contenders, a leading force in what the press has decided to call "Foxycore."

Recently, my friendship with the girls bonded a bit tighter (van accidents can do that). Anyway, the few days I recently got to spend with L7 have left me tired, deaf, speechless and smiling. Read on.

L7 is Jennifer Finch, bass & vocals; Donita Sparks, guitar and vocals; Suzi Gardner, guitar and vocals; and Dee Plakas, drums.

Q: In the history of L7, has this been your favorite year, or has it been a rollercoaster?

Jennifer: It's been a steady climb. I liked every year, each one was different.

Q: Suzi had her accident (a crane fell and hit her in the face) during the video shoot for "Pretend We're Dead." Did you ever get the video finished?

Jennifer: Yeah, it's our first single from BRICKS ARE HEAVY, which will be out April 15th. And yeah, we got it finished.

Frank: I heard four tracks from the new album. Could you compare the recording experience with Butch Vig to previous sessions?

Jennifer: With all our other recording experiences, we were under time pressure. Just compare Bricks to Smell The Magic. Smell was done in four or five days. We didn't have a lot of time to experiment. This time we simply had more time. Just for doing the drums, we went into this really big studio, with a huge drum room. And you can tell.

Q: You really can tell the difference. I like the added percussion on "Mr Integrity."

Jennifer: Yeah, the bongos. Cool bongos. You can really hear the difference in the drum sounds.

Q: Did your daily tour allowance go up on this tour?

Jennifer: Yes! It went up \$5 a day!

Frank: Let's talk about the current tour. How about your experiences at SXSW?

Jennifer: Don't get me started!

Frank: But you were looking forward to playing there!

Jennifer: I got so cranky. We really were running around afterward going "Who's in charge? I wanna talk to who's in charge! I wanna talk to SOMEONE!" But I think the cow tongues being thrown around over the fence into the crowd, that's memorable!

Q: Was that the first music hoopla conference type thing you played at?

Jennifer: Well, we kinda played the Olympia Underground Pop Festival with Fugazi. That thing Calvin Johnson put on, the guy from K Records. That was great! That was an awesome experience. So we played two events, one was very good and the latest (SXSW) was extremely unorganized, unprofessional and unsatisfying.

Q: So I guess you'll be back next year...

Jennifer: Yeah, right... If they want to pay us.

Q: Oh come on, Jennifer, they just give you everything a big rock star would want, don't kid me.

Jennifer: What are you trying to do? They paid us \$100! or one pass for one night for the band to share, or one bag of SXSW promotional material. I just wanted to see what the other bands were like. I'm in the industry too. All the speakers got flown there for free and there we are speaking the language of music... don't get me started.

Q: Would you like to be on a panel at a music conference like the New Music Seminar or SXSW?

Jennifer: I'd like to do a panel, yeah, when I'm older. They're kinda set up to learn about the music industry, so I'd wait 'til I'm in it longer. Those conferences are like computer or Tupperware conventions. Like the Concrete Forum in L.A. I never went but we did go to the Rip magazine party. Spinal Tap played. Temple Of The Dog, Soundgarden, Pearl Jam... It was pretty funny. It was supposed to be this cheesy metal stuff but the whole night, they play this alternative metal stuff, all the Sub-Pop bands blasted through the p.a., and all the post-Sub Pop graduates played.

Q: How many records are you actually on? Do you even know your discography?

Jennifer: First the Epitaph lp. Then SST's Melting Plot, we did "Yummy Yummy Yummy." Then "Baggs" on the Shonen Knife tribute lp. (We just heard Joey heard it and liked it.) We did the C/Z "Teriyake Asthma" 7 inch, covering "Blood Stains." Then "The Big One" compilation for Flipside. We did "American Society." And there are other low-budget indie comps, I think. The Sub-Pop 7-inch, "Shove," the Sub-Pop EP, "Smell The Magic," then the CD version with three extra tracks.



Q: So the rest of '92 is to support Bricks?

Jennifer: Oh, it's all touring. Europe in April, then we're back for a week in May, then back out until September, and on and on... Australia, Europe again.

Q: Is there anyone you'd like to tour with?

Jennifer: Izzy, Ozzy, Lemmy, Patti. Ha. Um, Helmet again. Cosmic Psychos. The Rolling Stones.

Q: Even without Bill Wyman?

Suzi: Without Bill. Hmmm, I kinda like Bill.

Jennifer: It would be kinda safer. We're all over 17.

Suzi: Actually I guess it would be better without Bill, beacuse I'm very young at heart.

Jennifer: And she's blonde!

Note: At this point, Suzi dares us to smell her armpit. The conversation turns to road hygiene. Nick their roadie is quite ripe after four days, Jennifer's on three days and Suzi three days also, without a shower. We all smell Suzi's pits.

Jennifer: Do you want to see my feet?

Q: Yeah, sure!

Jennifer: My socks may have absorbed some of the dirt, but... I play barefoot. (shoes off, Jennifer's soles are solid black with a hint of brown.)

This guy was playing with my bass strings the other night while I was sitting on the monitors during the break down part of "Wheels." I was doing that kinda sit-down-groove-with-audience-feel-good thing and this guy kept running his hand all over my bass and making this aaaggggh oooh drool noise like he was retarded, so I put my foot right in his face and kept pushing harder and harder and he wouldn't stop.

Donita (walks into room, looks at Jennifer's feet) Oh, what are they? Your feet? (Jennifer sort of smiles)

Jennifer: Last night in New York (at the Marquee) Suzi misunderstood the stage time. She thought we were going on at midnight and it was actually 11:15. So she was out somewhere completely missing. Because of her accident, we keep thinking she's going into some mind-fit memory-loss convulsion or something and forget everything. And this is in NYC! It's not like any member of the band to disappear like that and we worry about her, especially in New York! So it was dead time at the Marquee for about 40 minutes. Surgery was done about 10:35 or so and coincidentally, the Lunachicks, Babes In Toyland, Joan Jett and Sean Lennon were all backstage with us. So Lunachicks did a song, and then we were about ready to get Babes In Toyland down to play but we told jokes instead. It was scary.

Q: So Suzi walked in and just saw you telling jokes onstage?



*How can we wipe out AIDs in our lifetime?
Get Sub-Pop to distribute it.*

- Jennifer

**The press are just flopping around
in their own turds trying to catch
on to something like us**

*Is there anyone you'd like to tour with?
Izzy, Ozzy, Lemmy, Patti. Helmet, again
Cosmic Psychos. The Rolling Stones*

Jennifer: Well, what she saw was me sweating, saying, "now can we have the members of Vixen report to the stage?" But it turned out really good. Our set was tighter than we'd ever been, I guess because of a type of nervous tension. Also, during the set, some guy yelled "You gotta play in Jersey!" and the whole audience is grumbling, arrrggh. So I walked up to the mic and said, "I thought this was Jersey." They grumbled louder, "Aarrggghh."

Q: Since Suzi, Donita and you all sing, how do you choose who sings which songs?

Jennifer: It's usually who writes the song.

Donita: We flip a coin.

Dee: They draw straws and I hold the straws.

Jennifer: When Suzi and Donita write together, they sometimes switch off during the song.

Q: What have you been listening to lately, and who do you think is hot?

Jennifer: Iggy, Ozzy, Patti, Lemmy, Joey... In the states, I'd say Helmet, Nirvana, Cows, Trashcan School from L.A. There's a lot. In the van, we listen to a lot of truckin' stuff and old country stuff. Cosmic Psychos. Daylo Abortions from Australia.

Donita: Ministry!

Jennifer: Donita just bought a KLMD, what's that band? KMFDM. She was looking for this one song she likes but it wasn't on the record she bought.

Donita: I was looking for "Godlike" and it wasn't there. Wanna buy a KMFDM tape?

Q: What's the highlight of this tour been so far?

Jennifer: I'd have to say last night with Lunachicks playing "Feel Like Making Love" with Donita & I singing backup and telling jokes.

Q: What's this "Rock For Choice" thing about?

Jennifer: I did an interview once, in DeKalb, Illinois, and the interviewer asked me if I had AIDS. He heard I did! Isn't that weird? Where do people come up with this stuff? Anyway, Rock For Choice, yeah, we put together this organization called Rock For Choice because no one else was putting on pro-choice benefits.

Q: Is there a fund or something?

Jennifer: Yes, it benefits the Fund for the Feminist Majority, which is a really kickass organization. They work on a grassroots level, all the way to a lobby type level. They're not like a real radical group. Women's rights, y'know?

Q: How do they set up the concerts?

Jennifer: Well, what we did was, the first show we put on was us and Nirvana, and we got some really good press from it. So Donita got the idea to contact our

promoter friends and friends around the country to organize and send them some press and literature. Basically, encourage, be the encouraging force, to help them start to put on shows.

Q: Every magazine I pick up now from Rolling Stone to Newsweek has you in it. Feeling some pressure?

Jennifer: Yes, now even Jersey Beat! Let the hype machine roll! That's the thing with the press, they want to be responsible for you. They must feel stupid for letting Nirvana just sit from September to Christmas. What timing, right before Christmas! What a fluke of a mastermind. Christmas and new artists are a no no, you get drowned out by all the greatest hits and major artists onslaught.

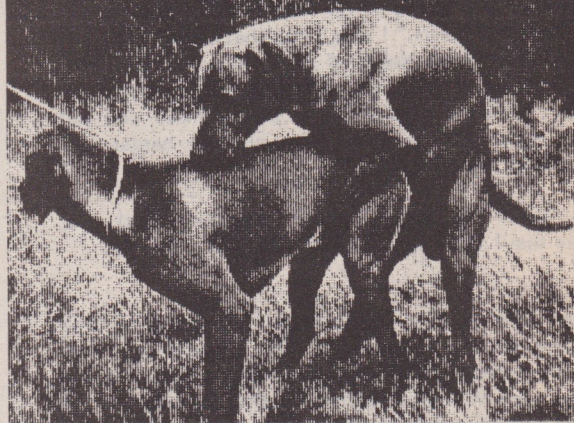
Q: Well now that the hype machine is starting to roll, are you in charge of your own press?

Jennifer: There is one girl who works at Slash and I think she's rather overworked. But all this? No one expected it. It's what I call the "Post Nirvana Drift." The press just flopping around in their own turds to catch on to something like us.

You can write to L7 at PO Box 3928, Hollywood CA 90078.

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Red Planet Records - Music for the next world

NOISE CULTURE is Alan Baez, vocals; John Bockskay, guitar; Max Chapshaw, drums; and Chris Isom, bass. Their sound is a powerful and provocative sonic blast of punk, funk, hardcore, and many other styles garnered from the urban rock scene.

The music's interwoven, raw-edged elements depict an eternal struggle and a continuing call for help, hope, and healing for our world and our culture. The band has released two demo tapes, "Noise Culture" and "Moving Mountains." The first demo has been released as an EP on a German record label.

I met with lead singer Alan Baez at Union Square Park on a sunny Monday afternoon in April. As I walked into the park looking for a 5'8" Puerto Rican in black fatigues, I heard a voice behind me say, "Hey, sir, you got a dollar?" As I turned my head, who did I see but Mr. Baez, grinning with a shopping bag from Revolution Books.

Interview by Sam Doe, photographs by Sam Lahoz

Q: So, any plans for a full-length album?

Alan: No, but we are working on a sort of movie. It contains most of the material from our last release.

Q: When will that be coming out?

A: Sometime around late fall or early winter.

Q: Who's producing you guys?

A: We are. It's all being done independently.

Q: I've noticed that all your songs seem to be concerned with social issues and giving advice in different areas, and talking against social and political evils. Is there any overall message?

A: The message is freedom, justice, and human rights, and brotherhood...by any means necessary.

Q: Do you think a rock song is sufficient to get that message across?

A: Well, while it may not always be sufficient to fully get a message across, it can at least raise the important questions and provide a kind of blueprint towards finding solutions. Hopefully it does at least serve as food for thought, and then it's up to the listener to take it from there.

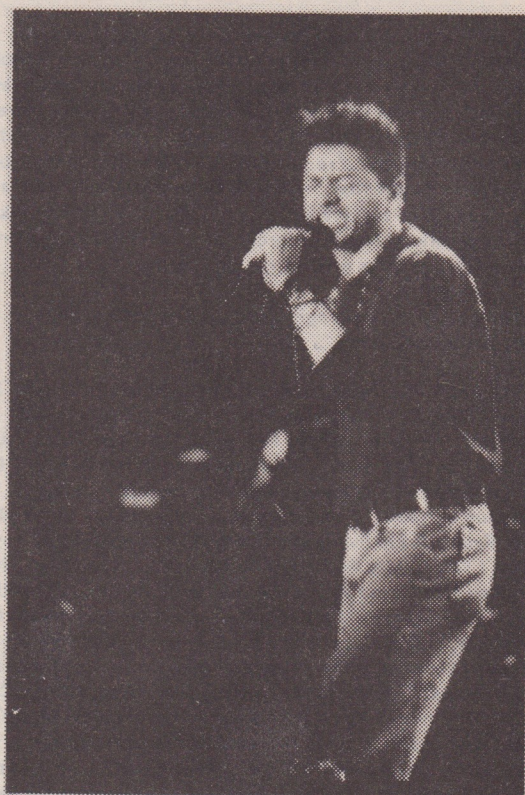
Q: Would you prefer being a writer, doing articles or books?

A: I'm quite content with my own little rebel songs, thanks. Music is more of an in-your-face kind of medium, in that it's always there whether you like it or not. If you wanna read a book or an article, you have to seek it out, it won't come to you. But music's always there, in the air, serving as the soundtrack of our lives.

Q: In other words, a book is something for those who can read, and music...

A: Well, it's not a question of literacy, altho that does play a part. But I think it's more of a question of access. Many of the songs that had an impact on my life, I first

NOISE CULTURE



I didn't start
reading books until
I got up the nerve
to walk into a
bookstore...and
steal 'em

heard accidentally. The first time I heard Grandmaster Flash & The Furious 5's "The Message," it was through some ghetto blaster on the subway. The first time I heard the Dead Kennedys, it was comin' out of somebody's apartment window, and I said "What the fuck is that?" On the other hand, I didn't start reading books until I got up the nerve to walk into a bookstore...and steal 'em. Besides, I'd rather listen to what Jello Biafra or Chuck D. have to say then read some articles or book by William F. Buckley or Pat Buchanan, any day.

Q: Along those lines, one thing about political rock and artists like Jello is that a lot of times, these artists will sing to the same audience over and over. What they call preaching to the converted. And meanwhile, the people who are actually buying records, if they're buying so-called alternative music, will buy The Cure, PIL, Depeche Mode, and bands you hear on the radio because they're more palatable. So how does a politically minded band like Noise Culture go about the business of getting a message out there without continuing the cycle?

A: It ain't easy. Sometimes you have to find a means of subverting the status quo, whether it's by writing catchy songs that everyone will love, then suddenly attacking them with the real issues, like a soldier in a Trojan Horse. Or simply getting out there amongst the people who aren't into what you're trying to say. It's not easy, but you have to be creative, use guerilla tactics, so to speak. Of course you always have to be wary of being taken hostage by the corrupting forces of fame and fortune once you've achieved the goal of getting inside.

Q: So you mean packaging your material to appeal to a ready-made audience?

A: No, you don't have to change your music to sound like anyone else. Sometimes you just have to find a means of appealing to their needs. For instance, industrial music appeals to the need for melodic dance beats. It's basically disco with a message. Or you can appeal to the audience's need to understand what's going on in their own lives. A kid living in some dead end suburban town doesn't know why he listens to Motley Crue, except that it makes him forget about the real world that's suffocating him. Well, maybe if someone explains to him why this world is suffocating him, he'd listen. And maybe if someone told him how, he would take control of his world and stop being suffocated, he'd rejoice. Well, Motley Crue ain't telling him shit, so who's prepared to fill that void? I think we spend entirely too much time preaching to the already converted and bumping heads with the enemy, and not enough time reaching out to the people who haven't pledged allegiance to any camps.

Q: Do the other members of the band feel as you do in terms of lyrics and opinions?

A: I don't really want to speak for the others, but I think I can basically say yes to that. We may at times approach issues from a different direction...

Q: So basically it's a business relationship. You all come from different backgrounds and you come together for a common cause.

A: Yeah, a business relationship...the business of changing the world.

Q: How do you prepare for a revolution at a time when the country seems to be getting more conservative?

A: I think the first step is to acknowledge and accept the facts that these [right-wing] sub-groups and many others like them are preparing themselves very carefully, and that they do take their "mission" deadly seriously. Once we know who the enemy is, how he operates, and what he's all about, he becomes much easier to handle. After that, it's really just a question of deciding how to deal with him. In this type of revolution, you don't necessarily want to liquidate the opposing force as much as you want to make him understand, beyond a shadow of a doubt, that he cannot and will not ever control you or negate your freedom. And of course, you need to be fully prepared to fight fire with fire, and the enemy needs to be made aware that you're more than ready to rain on his parade.

Powerfully and permanently. Of course, he's gotta realize that the power to continue to control our own lives will only be maintained if those of us who believe in freedom and justice, and civil, equal, and human rights, an end to oppression of any kind, realize that this ain't no kids game. That we need to finally band together as a unified force in this struggle. If I'm all wrapped up in my anti-racism bag and you in your anti-sexism bag, and we don't see the obvious connection between the two, then how do we expect to defeat an enemy who has indeed banded together.... under the name of their own personal little scratch 'n sniff lord.

Q: Do you have any suggestions for the person reading this right now who wants to make a difference? What do they do once they put this magazine down?

A: They can start by picking up a copy of the Anarchist Cookbook or Guerilla Warfare, or any number of manuals, regulations, and books available on the subject of revolution, urban warfare, and survival. The enemy's ordering a whole new batch of this reading material even as we speak. You might wanna enroll in a firearms training course and hit the range for some target practice. Store away some food, just in case. Self-defense classes are always a plus. Get to know your neighbors. Get yourself a good pair of combat boots. Break 'em in real good. This is important. Start wearin' more functional clothes. Those saggin' pants just ain't gettin' it. How you gonna run in those damn things? Get involved, get into it. Get real. Quit singin' and start swingin'.

Questions, criticisms, and requests for more information can be directed to Noise Culture, PO Box 3162, Jamaica NY 11431.

NOISE CULTURE

by Tom Brebric

Well Primed Records, a relatively new label just a little over a year old, has emerged as one of the main proponents of the New Brunswick, NJ alternative music scene. Such quality releases as *kiaro scuro*, *Transylvia*, and "The Thorazine Stretch Factor" compilation CD led me to seek out the purveyors of these fine products.

Two Rutgers College students, Frank Bridges (owner/founder of WP, and also bassist for *kiaro scuro*) and Brian Goad ("I just sort of hang out") are the driving force behind the label.

Q: Explain how Well Primed operates.

Frank: It's run like a cooperative, which is necessary since it's mainly me and I've been going to school. Usually, the band will come to me with the music already recorded, and we'll try and figure out, with the monies WP and the money the band has (or has not), what is the better release to do - be it a single, CD, etc. WP has done some cassette-only releases too, such as *God's Children*.

Q: Did you have any experience in the record industry before you started the label?

Frank: Brian and I worked at Hannibal Cartage Records, which was sort of a world folk reissue pop type label.

WELL PRIMED *New Brunswick's Cool New Label*

They got bought out by Rykodisc and we lost our jobs. I got a lot of knowledge from Hannibal.

Brian: And a lot of office supplies!

Q: What would you say was one of your bigger mistakes when you first started the label?

Frank: We put out the *kiaro scuro* and the *Wooden Soliders* releases in plain white record jackets, because we couldn't afford colored jackets. It now turns out that it costs only a little more to put out a CD with the proper artwork. Anyway, we've broken even with *kiaro scuro* but not with the *Wooden Soldiers*. It's tough to break even with a band that has parted ways. We also saw flaws in the numbering system we used in keeping track of releases; now we don't use numbers but letters instead.

Q: How are your other releases doing?

Frank: Everyone loved "The Thorazine Stretch Factor" CD - it made the cover of CMJ and that's great, considering the distribution has been

by hand. We had offers for distribution but we couldn't back it up with advertising. Dutch East is distributing our singles and Comm 3 is distributing all our stuff in Europe.

Q: Have you discovered any trends regarding record purchasing in today's crummy economic environment?

Frank: We discovered that a third of all record purchases are done on impulse. Aside from that, it's hard for labels to make a go of it these days because the market is just not very good now.

Q: Are there legal contracts for the bands to sign when dealing with Well Primed?

Frank: We have them by the balls! No, actually, everything is by trust. We urge the bands to copyright their stuff. As far as that's concerned, I just want to have rights on the product, they can put the songs anywhere they want.

Q: Do you think Well Primed will be able to keep you afloat financially after graduation?

Frank: Right now, I consider it a hobby. Things are so unstable. It's a hobby, but one that you can make some money out of. Mainly, it helps me stay involved with music.

Q: What would be the next step for you?

Brian: A good-looking receptionist and Mafia involvement.

Frank: We feel we're putting out good products, like the printing quality on *Transylvia's* single, but the next step would be better distribution.

Q: On your own?

Frank: No, on your own you make more money, but it's limited to how far you can drive. I've heard all these horror stories of people not



TRANSYLVIA

Photo by Michele Taylor

getting paid, etc., and that's why I'd rather stay focused on New Brunswick and build this thing up like a fester, like a big sore and let it ooze out. If I have just a few releases, people might think they can jerk me around, but if I can get a nice catalog - then I really have a good bargaining tool. As far as the music goes, I really wanted it to be just a New Brunswick label just because it is a focusing point. Gerrymander Bob is our first out-of-state band, from Pennsylvania. The recession is like a

forest fire, labels like us who weren't hurt get a rise up. A lot of labels have gone down and there's a void for mid-sized labels.

Q: Tell me about your pricing structure. For example, you ship postpaid as opposed to labels who ask an extra \$3 for P&H.

Frank: I want to keep prices as low as possible because all the bands are new and it helps them get exposure if it is a little cheaper. I don't want to

get caught up in the jacking up of prices. CD's are a scam, it's cheaper to make CD's than an album, but the American public is paying another \$6, people are getting ripped off left and right. In my case, it costs a little more for the Cd and the artwork. I've patterned WP's pricing kind of like Dischord does it (a certain price for CD's, cassettes, lp's, etc.)

Q: What's your favorite format?

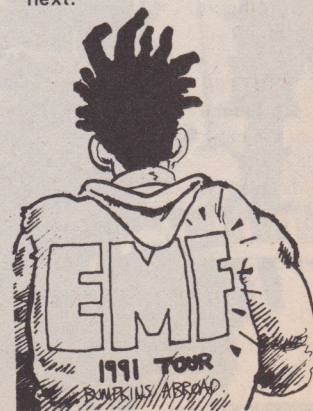
Frank: The singles are cool - it's cheap and it can look as beautiful or as simple as you want. CD's and lp's get the same reviews as singles. If it's a first release and I sent out a CD to an out-of-state radio station, maybe two or three cuts get played. What's the point of sending out another nine extra songs? We have more of a chance of getting those three songs played [if we just do a single].

Q: Does Well Primed do management and promo?

Frank: Yes, it's our next step. The idea of WP comes from priming a well, you put a little bit of water to get the rest of the water. We'd like to become Well Primed Management and Well Primed Press as well. WP Press would handle poetry and nutritional issues. We intend to stay involved and reach the conglomerate stage! Economic hard times breed inspiration and where there's a will, there's a way.

Q: Any closing comments?

Frank: A lot of shows you've seen with WP bands are things we've organized. We're trying to get the bands to play together, not to be a clique, but as a way to get the whole Well Primed thing happening. Maybe another Thorazine compilation or an unsigned bands contest might be next.



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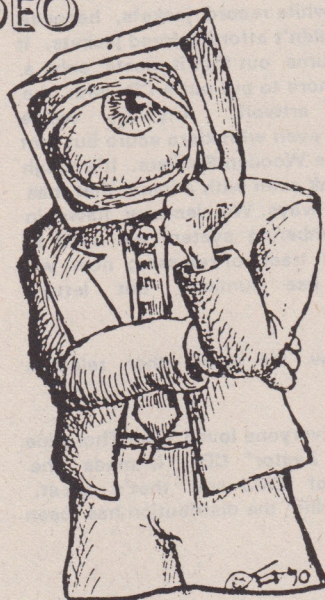
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PUGWASH, NOVA SCOTIA -- APRIL 12, 1992 - Today I awoke to a snowstorm, with the ground covered with snow. Oh what a delightful place I live in. Ha! We are trying to limit this column to cassette-only releases. This time around, we have a lucky seven to discuss...

CLAUDE COLEMAN JR, 568 Westgate Dr, Edison NJ 08820 - I listened to this tape just after reading Jim's primer on making a demo last issue. Shit, this dude did **EVERYTHING** wrong. No address, six songs, and taken one side at a time, he has the best song last and the worst song first. Coleman is or has been in half a dozen bands, including All God's Children and Skunk. I sort of think he tried to demonstrate all his varied abilities on one tape. "Pray For The Rain" is easily the best number and it's the very last one.

HUM - "Fillet Show" PO Box 4083, Urbana IL - This is a four piece band. It sounds as tho they took one of those music machines you buy at K Mart, laid down one drum roll, three guitar riffs, and half a dozen bass beats, ran that mix over and over until they had enough and then set the decibel level near the top and cut the vocals in. Vocals ain't that bad, if you can stand the racket behind them. I was wishing this one had been on vinyl and Ben Weasel had gotten ahold of it.

GODS OF THE REVOLUTION "Bullish Rage" - PO Box 210, Madison WI 53701 - Yow! Killer heavy metal which will make your feet bounce, your head spin, and your ears ache. Great stuff to clear the cobwebs out of your brain and unwanted relatives out of your house!

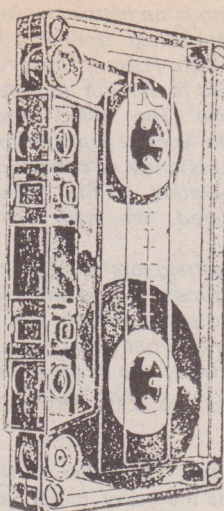
METAL FLAKE MOTHER - "Beyond The Java Sea" - PO Box 3597, Chapel Hill NC 27515 - This tape comes with a bitty bag of coffee attached. Of course the bag on my copy was torn open. There was fucking coffee everywhere; all over every item in the package. And I am one in an apparently small minority - I don't like coffee. In fact, I **HATE** the smell of the stuff. And it was **EVERYWHERE**. So I started off on the wrong foot with this group. However, they soon won me over. It's very good pop music; 17 songs on one tape, which is very easy to listen to for a long time. I'm going to keep my copy in my truck. Send for one and pray your coffee bag doesn't split!

POOR EXCUSE - "The Missing Link" - PO Box 212, Blooming Grove NY 10914 - The drummer and bass vie with one another to see who can play the loudest and fastest, which the vocalist screams out words as fast and loud as he can. Thrash punk?

THIRD EYE BUTTERFLY - "What The Thunder Said" - 61-36 160th St, Flushing NY 11365 - The first release from this trio is a 7 song EP. Pop music with a hard-edged tinge. You can hear the punk and psychedelic backgrounds but you can also easily imagine hearing this on an A.M. radio station.

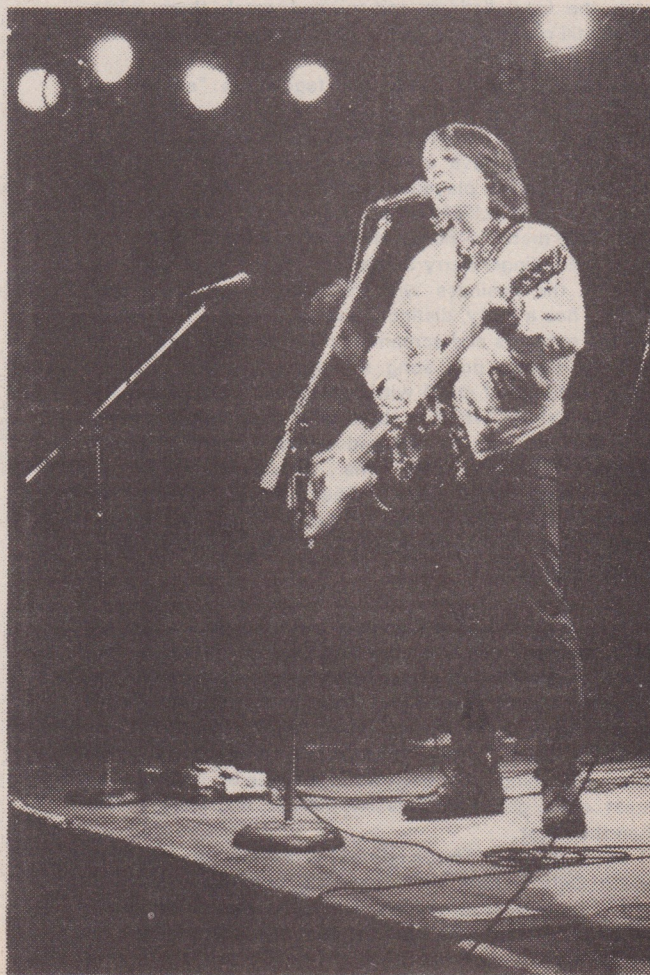
WRETCHED REFUSE - "Purge" - 6611 W 73rd Pl, Arvada CO 80003 - Take some basic rock lyrics and mix in some punk music. Add a dash of Christian rock, a touch of spoken word, a dab of industrial noise and a spattering of pop feeling. Mix liberally with experimental hands. There you have it.

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culture

By Rodney Leighton



Our usual "Hard Rock" column is on hiatus while we look for a replacement for writer Craig Donner. After hearing of Vince Neil's departure from Poison, Craig went into a severe depression and tried to commit suicide by playing Spinal Tap's *Break Like The Wind* through quadrophonic headphones with the volume cranked to 11. A large part of Craig's brain was instantly calcified but he survived and is currently recuperating at the Secaucus Home For The Mentally Bewildered. We wish him the best.

In the meantime, we've been getting lots of demo tapes from New Jersey's underground metal scene and, for a change, we've actually listened to some of them this time around. Here's a quick rundown of what's going on out there in the 'burbs... You never know, one of these bands might turn out to be the next Trixter. - Jim Testa

A lot of local scenesters think that WIPATRACTION, from suburban Essex County, leads the heavy metal rat pack with a combination of songs, looks, and savvy. Lead singer Will Harrington can out-wail Sebastian Bach and the band's musicianship and stagecraft can take even ordinary rock numbers and turn them into showstoppers. More importantly, these guys could all moonlight at Chipperdales, and the combination of those killer bods and the band's power ballads should be melting hearts from coast to coast before Skid Row releases their next lp. Wipatractraction plays out in the area all the time, so check the local listings and try and catch them while they're still playing local clubs. (Wipatractraction, PO Box 42, Caldwell NJ 07006).

So many different bands get tagged as "alternative metal" nowadays that the term really doesn't mean anything -- after all, what do Helmet, Soundgarden, and Psychefunkapus have in common besides the fact that their videos all get played on *Headbanger's Ball* and *120 Minutes*? But LIFEHOUSE, from NYC, really are "alternative metal" -- heavy and hard, but with a different edge. Lead singer Perry Serpa (one of the few publicity dudes in the business with the balls to get on stage himself) has a gritty, distinctive voice that sets him apart from the growlers and screamers. The band's songs hew close to classic pop song structures (verse, chorus, bridge, that kind of stuff) with cool lyrics. I especially like "I'm The Other," which is about what runs thru the head of a guy in, um, an alternative metal band: "Dead superheroes don't play the Bowery/Brain in a haze/dreaming glory days." Their "Fuse" cassette is actually a DIY album than a demo, and well worth checking out. (Circumstantial, 301 E 22nd St #7K, New York NY 10010)

THAT'S LIFE, whose members hail from Union City and North Bergen, can also stop traffic by unbuttoning their shirts, especially lead singer Sonni Lynn and guitarist Joey Centeno. Lynn's vocals and Centeno's guitar lines both draw heavily from classic blues metal, especially on "Another Shot," one of those great bluesy metal tunes about drowning your sorrows in a bottle of booze. Their latest demo gets even bluesier, ballsier, and more rockin' than their first.

I tried to check That's Life out at a show at the Bond Street Cafe in New York City -- big mistake. Their "12 p.m." show time turned into 3 a.m., thanks to the brain-damaged mutant who runs the joint and apparently runs on Pacific Time. Bond Street's a good place if you're a teenage funk band from Connecticut and need a place for your first gig, but I'd rather have root canal without any



novocaine before I'd go there again to see a band. (That's Life, 156 Stewart Terrace, Totowa NJ 07512)

Jersey's got more than pretty boys and blues rockers, though. In fact, you can't get much uglier than ARROGANT RESPONSE, whose snarling, heavy thrash has found a loyal following among their homeboys in Weehawken and Hoboken. Although the band's been around for five years, the lineup has only recently gelled with the addition of guitarist Bill Genese, who had some major label exposure as a member of Gothic Slam a while back. These guys sound like a young Metallica -- hard, heavy, angry as hell and ready to hammer your ears into blood pudding.

Does publicity work? Sometimes. I had seen enough good reviews of MUDDSLIDE to make me curious, so I called their manager and got a copy of their 3-song demo. The band is young, the singer's got more of a pop voice than a metal yowl, and the songs are tight and well put together; but very few of the adjectives adorning their presskit ("sexy," "amazing," "powerful") seem to come through in the music. From what I hear, they're closer to "competent," and "promising." (That's why you never see Jersey Beat quotes in presskits, I guess.) (% Lisa Ludwick, 821 Hudson Ave, Secaucus NJ 07094)

If you like your music a little softer, you can't do much better than BARON. Peter Baron's a heavy metal survivor, older than most of the twentyish musicians in this piece, but his latest band sounds like a winner, with a fresh, bright pop sound that brings back memories of 70's hitmakers like the Raspberries and Cheap Trick. They've got a great power ballad in "In The Rain," and an unmistakable Kiss influence that provides the power in their power-pop.

SYSTEM ADDICT, from the Paramus area, fuse thrash, hard funk, and speed metal into one of the most original sounds on the scene. With former Non-Fiction bassist Damon Trotta providing intricate riffs and rhythms, this combo can appeal to the more cerebral fans of progressive rock and down 'n dirty headbangers alike.

New Orleans wasn't big enough to hold BODYBAG SLAM, so the group relocated to New Jersey, where their combination of hardcore thrash with rap vocals is quickly finding an appreciative audience. They seem equally comfortable playing for the metal crowd at places like Studio One, and for the punk set at CBGB's. (3 Halves Entertainment, PO Box 1312, Teaneck NJ 07666)

BIG GROOVE live up to their name by charging their bluesy metal tunes with a funky backbeat. Vinny Basile's vocals have an appealing warmth and the band writes solid pop songs.

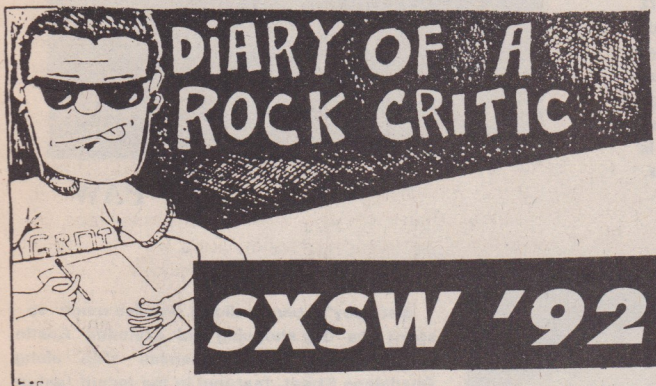
by Jim Testa

The New Music Seminar is all about money. That's in the summer. The CMJ convention, which comes in the fall, focuses on college radio (and has a much higher percentage of college jocks in attendance), so people there tend to talk a little more about music. But my favorite new-music convention every year is South By Southwest (or SXSW) in Austin, which isn't so much a music industry function as Spring Break for grownups, with cool bands instead of wet t-shirt contests (but, believe me, just as much beer.)

This year's confab was the sixth annual SXSW conference, and like its predecessors, lavished a lot of attention on print media's role in alternative music. It would be nice if they'd include fanzines on at least one or two of the panels, but at least there were plenty of writers from the conference's 27 co-sponsoring regional newspapers (ranging from Seattle's "The Rocket" to Baltimore's "Maryland Musician.") That's an awful lot of rock critics converging in one place at one time, but SXSW provides more than enough music and talk to keep us all busy.

Austin, Texas is a beautiful city, clean and full of wide-open spaces, with a scenic lake that bisects the center of town and more Mexican restaurants than you can shake a taco at. And it's a wonderful place for bands, lots of clubs, and a local populace who eat up the never-ending feast of honky tonk, country-western, metal, disco, pop, and alternative music. The best thing about Austin, though, is that it's not New York or Los Angeles. The pace is a little slower, and the people there really care about live music. That's reflected in almost every aspect of SXSW.

I arrived in Austin on a Wednesday afternoon, looking forward to another great year of live music and Texas hospitality. Five nights, twenty-two bands, six conference panels, eight fajitas, fourteen tacos, and about a case of beer later, here's what I can still remember....



The conference didn't really begin until Thursday, so Wednesday night was more or less open. A lot of the delegates there early were going to the Austin Music Awards, a local event in which the Austin Chronicle honors everything from the best local bands to favorite clubs, records, demo tapes, and radio shows. Austin is probably the only city in the world that even gives an award to its favorite rock critic.

But award shows tend to be a bit stuffy, and besides, I'm like a kid in a candy store when I'm near so many clubs, so it was off to explore the downtown music scene. And in The Jelly Club (which the year before had been the Cannibal Club, and the year before that, Club Cairo), who should be playing but New Jersey's own favorite sons, Ween. A wacky duo from the Trenton area, Ween consists of two youngsters, one on vocals and the other on guitar, backed by a tape of drums, bass, and samples. Ween just released their second album, *The Pod*, on Shimmydisc Records. The Austin crowd -- including quite a number of out of town writers -- went crazy for the boys, egging them on to several encores. Of course, most of the critics went home believing Ween's bogus presskit, which says they're brothers (not) from Minneapolis (yeah, right).

Willie Nelson was a no-show for Thursday's opening ceremonies, leaving it to country singer Michelle Shocked to befuddle the audience with a rambling, nearly incoherent speech in which she tried to compare today's rap and funk scenes to black minstrelsy in the 1800's. Opening day panels included a session with major label A&R men, who explained how they signed bands and then fielded questions from about a dozen local musicians who wanted to know why no one had signed them.



DUCKHILLS

Photo by Jim Testa

The afternoon's activities included a moving and spirited panel discussion of the late rock critic Lester Bangs, including reminiscences by a number of his contemporaries. Epic Records' Andy Schwartz, former editor of New York Rocker magazine, read excerpts from an interview with Bangs by Jim DeRogatis which helped affirm Bang's status as one of the most prescient and influential writers in the history of rock. (See Jim's remembrance of Lester in this issue's "Where Were You In '82?" section.)

I started out the evening's entertainment with a bill of local (that is, Austin) bands, who all turned out to be the same sort of lame funk weenie crap that's overrun New York. Band after band, I think there were four of them in a row, with nothing but ugly white guys playing slap bass and post-hardcore thrash riffs while the lead singer jumped around barechested and screamed a lot. Uggh.

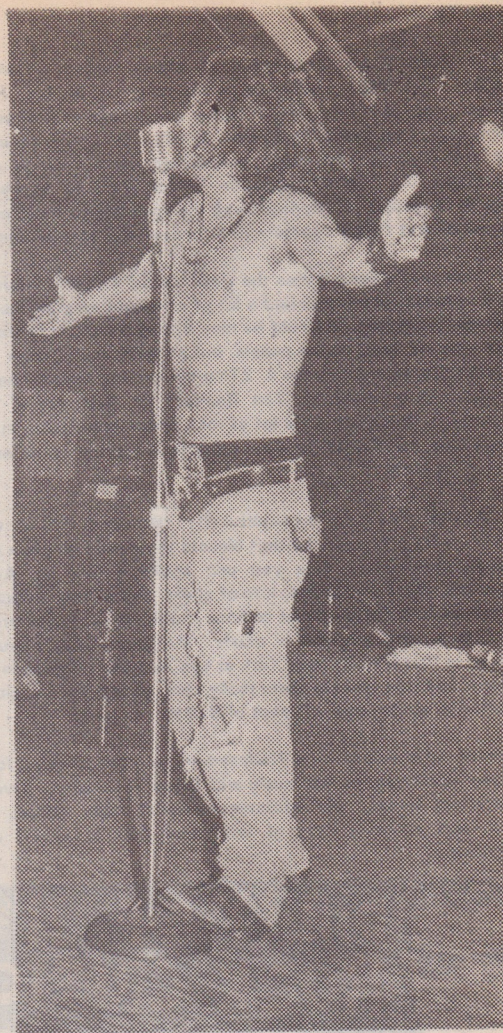
Now, you wanna know what kind of weird shit happens when you've been doing a fanzine for ten years? Here's an example. I'm at this place, sitting through the second or third consecutive funk weenie band, waiting patiently for the Poster Children (who were going on last), and this sort of pudgy guy with a receding hairline comes up to me and offers his hand. "You Jim Testa?" he asks. Yup. "Hi, I'm Lyle Preslar!" And so it was.

So here I am in Texas hobnobbing with the guitar player from Minor Threat, who's now this thirtyish record exec (Lyle works at Caroline, babysitting the Sub Pop account). What's even weirder is that the next night, I'm at another club watching the Dead Milkmen, of all things, when Lyle comes in again and says hi. So he's on my right and I feel a nudge on my left, and when I look over, it's Mitch Easter - pudgier, balder and even a little older than Lyle -- saying hello. And I'm thinking, if this was 1982, and the guitarist from Minor Threat AND the guy who's producing R.E.M. both came over to say hi to me, I would be THE COOLEST GUY IN THE WORLD. And instead, here it is 1992, and I am the only one in a room full of punk rock fans who has any idea who these two guys are. Like Yogi once said, it was deja vu all over again.

Anyway, back to Thursday night. Dillon Fence, on Mammoth Records, play a sort of wimpy, meandering country rock that didn't impress me any more live than it has on record. But finally, after a long evening, the Poster Children came on with their new drummer (dude from Precious Wax Drippings) and blew the doors off the place (figuratively speaking, since it was outside), rocking harder and louder than ever.

The panels on Friday included a gabfest with music lawyers, discussing the finer points of stealing their clients' hard-earned royalties and advances; a wide-ranging discussion of "The Indie Landscape," which included a lot of kvetching about major labels signing all the best indie bands away; and a raunch and entertaining conclave on "Women In Rock" with women music writers (which Claudia Perry dubbed "The BWP Panel," for Bitches With Paychecks).

Friday night's entertainment included a hot Austin band called The Duckhills, with a catchy country/pop sound and a theatrical frontman named Benjamin who reminded me of a less infantile Jonathan Richman. The girls love this guy so the band draws really well, although apparently the local rockcrit establish can't stand him. A metal band from Lawrence, Kansas called PAW had a big buzz going, so my entourage taxi'd across town to Austin's big neon-and-chrome encrusted metal venue, The Backroom, for a look-see. Paw looked and sounded like a minor league Pearl Jam and didn't have much going for them in the way of originality, although a few songs early in the set did have a less generic, buzzing guitar quality that reminded me more of Squirrel Bait than Seattle grunge. Their singer is going to look great on video, though. Bet they're signed by summer.



PAW



The MAGNOLIAS

Photo by Jim Testa

Saturday's panels didn't promise much so I spent the day shopping and exploring Austin, including the city's bohemian strip along Guadalupe Street, featured in the recent feature film Slacker. Much like New York's Greenwich Village, "The Strip" features lots of record and t-shirt stores and fast food, and abuts the campus of the University of Texas.

Saturday night found me hopping from club to club; memorable performances included Lawrence, Kansas' Nic Cosmos, a countrified pop group; the Magnolias, from Minneapolis, who wowed their audience with selections from their new lp on Alias Records; Boston's Cavedogs, who kept joking about the bad reviews their Soul Martini album has received from the music press; and a young thrash band from Memphis called DDT, which features the songs of legendary producer Jim Dickinson.

Sundays at SXSW mean barbecue and softball. I ate too much and pitched very badly (the print media team lost 16-4, ouch!), got a bad sunburn, and nursed an ugly hangover. But just wait until next year.

Okay, kids, I'm going to make this easy. If you make a demo tape, remember these simple rules:

Put your name and address on the tape sleeve. Send a black and white photo (if Rolling Stone or Hit Parader want a color photo, don't worry, they'll send their own photographer to take one). Short demos work better than long ones, especially if you're sending them to clubs or zines. Don't fuck around, put your best song first; never assume anyone will bother listening to the second song if the first one doesn't grab them by the balls. Trust me. See, I just saved you a \$350 registration to the New Music Seminar. Now go make a demo and send us a copy.

DUCKHILLS

% Barber Mgmt, 906 1/2 Congress Ave, Austin TX 78701

The Duckhills I saw at SXSW were energetic and ebullient, the kind of band that hippie college girls love to dance to. On this new demo, the band sounds almost dour, certainly a lot more serious. Maybe all that press about being a "babe magnet" made lead singer Benjamin McDonald rethink the band's direction. I prefer the lighter stuff myself; what's the use of writing a song called "Play Sexy" if you're going to sound like Dire Straits? - Jim T.

DUF DAVIS & THE BOOK CLUB - 6 song demo
51 Grover Ave, Princeton NJ 08540

Each of these 5 songs is a pastiche of some well-worn genre (at least, that's what I think is going on), but the Dylan sendup and the country-religious song seem like awfully elaborate setups for such weak punchlines. At least "Another Boy," a Burrito/Byrds country-pop tune, and "March," a honky-tonk instrumental with a mean sax, work on their own. Lots of talent here, especially in the playing, but the humor just doesn't work for me. - Jim T.

DR. KEVORKIAN SUICIDE MACHINE BAND - demo

% George, 12562 McDougall, Detroit MI 48212

You want to die and they'll help you. Psycho folksy punk, done by this two-piece with the help of overdubbing and moments of feedback. The vocals reminded me of Tesco Vee. The song in some slavic language has something to do with genitals, I think. Worth the listen to try and decipher, although better quality production would help. Tom B.

DOWN AND AWAY - "Artifact"/"Circuit" demo
No address

Down And Away is 2/3 of Phantom Tollbooth (the rhythm section of bassist Jerry Smith and drummer Jon Coates), the seminal NY noisecore band, second only to Sonic Youth for inspired feedback-fueled guitar. Billy Pilgrim handles guitar duties and Jerry does the vocals. "Artifact" is a droning post-punk dirge with a pulsating bass line and impressive prog-rock guitar solos. Jerry's vocals reminded me of John Cale. "Circuit" is heavier and grungier and probably kicks ass like Helmet live, although the band's precious and the meticulous, almost fussy, production blunts its impact on the demo. - Jim T.

E PLURIBUS UNUM - "Reality" demo

126 Lake Dr East, Wayne NJ 07470

This was the first thing I listened to out of the batch of

material I got to review for this issue, because I knew I was in for a treat. Heavily skinhead influenced (or couldn't you tell from the band's name and the title?), the look of the demo is quite professional, with clean typesetting and graphics. The music is clean and polished metal/hardcore. "Stabbed In The Back," "A Skinhead Anthem," "Keep The Faith" -- give credit for the unique song titles and subjects. Anyhow, this is well done and meaty, as you'd expect. I'm sure this would go over better at Studio One (metal club with wannabe tough moshers) than at The Pipeline (the real McCoy). - Tom A.

FLATUS - "Get It While You're Young"

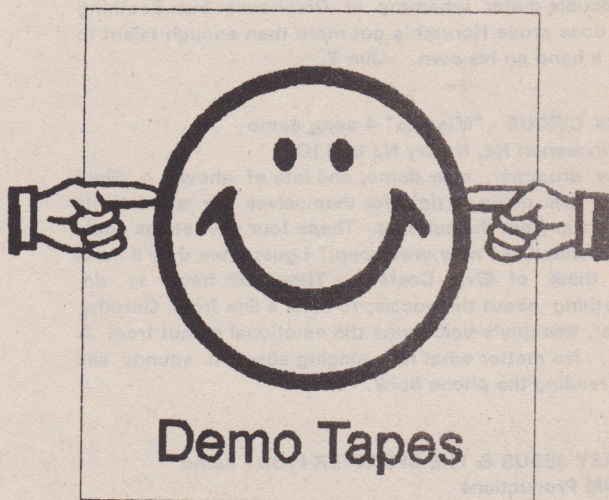
Round, 15 Lawrence St, Hamburg NJ 07419

Sophomoric young-punk that reminds me a bit of early Blisters and the like. Not bad, and kind of funny on the title track. - Tom A.

HATEFLOWERS - Demo

Rift, PO Box 33302, Minneapolis MN 55433

This is a 6-song demo, five tunes being of the Husker Du variety with one terrible funk tune thrown in for bad measure. Lazy, laidback vocals flow over Punk Lite music, pretty and clean. Excellent sound quality but it could use a little more bite, songwriting-wise. - Ben W.



HUCKLEBUCK - Demo

FYIDIM, Box 512 Edgewater Branch, Lakewood OH 44107

And again, FYIDIM prove that you can't judge a demo by its ridiculous cover (or can you?) Like labelmates Sleazy Jesus, Hucklebuck are a tour-de-force of juvenile hick-rock. Far from being politically correct, this is inspired from something evil. Carl Jung said we have to come to accept both our good and bad sides; so sit back and enjoy the ride. Included is a unique cover of Jane's Addiction's "Mountain Song." - Tom A.

KID-WITH-MAN-HEAD, demo

23 Pinehurst Ave, Pt Monmouth NJ 07758

Musically, Kid With Man Head sound like a lot of other DWD bands (that's Dudes With Diplomas) -- strummy 3-chord pop with collegiate lyrics (lots of metaphor, symbolism, irony, and other stuff you learn in American

Lit) and that bright, trebly power-chord guitar sound inherited from SoCal punk bands like the Descendents and Big Drill Car. They seem like they'd be a lot of fun live, though, at least from their presskit... "strapping young love toys," it says here. - Jim T.

MILKTOAST - demo

6505 Phinny Ave No, Seattle WA 98103

A little thrashier than most of what you'd consider "Seattle Rock," but no big surprises here either. Well-played thrash core, nicely produced, and the color xerox tape sleeve is a nice touch, but I've heard all this before. - Jim T.

SEETHING GREY - demo

216 Felton Ave, Highland Pk NJ 08904

Pete Horvath is best known as part of the amazing NYC band Greyhouse and also for his stint in the legendary P.E.D. but Seething Grey is the first project I know of where Pete gets to call all the important shots himself - singer, songwriter and guitarist. The music has that post-R.E.M. alternative twang so beloved of college dj's (and yours truly, actually), with supple, flowing melodies, cool backup harmonies, and lyrics that tug at your ear and pull you in for a closer listen. Not quite as mind-splattering as the double-guitar whammy of Greyhouse but Seething Grey does prove Horvath's got more than enough talent to carry a band on his own. - Jim T.

SHIRK CIRCUS - "Miasma" 4 song demo

85 Povershon Rd, Nutley NJ 07110

New drummer, new demo, and lots of shows -- Shirk Circus are doing all right for themselves for a relatively young trio from the suburbs. These four new songs could be described as "new wave pop;" I guarantee they'll make you think of Elvis Costello. They still have to do something about the vocals; to steal a line from Dorothy Parker, this guy's voice runs the emotional gamut from A to B. No matter what he's singing about, it sounds like he's reading the phone book. - Jim T.

SLEAZY JESUS & THE SPLATTER PIGS - demo

FYIDIM Productions

The cover led me to believe that at most, this band might be disciples of the G.G. Allin school of trash rock, but it turned out to be another rock solid demo from the folks at FYIDIM. If you love the horns of the Bosstones, the honesty of Poison Idea, and the voice of Ren from the ultra-cool Ren & Stimpy cartoons, you'll wanna give this a listen. Latino-core full of manure-flavored salsa and lots of zing for you & your gluteus maximus. Four tunes, including a great tribute to "Beer," and what with the Elvis stamp balloting going on right now, they've even included a tribute to Elvis (something about how the King-used to fuck pigs). Highly recommended. - Tom A.

SPIRIT ASSEMBLY - demo

% Gus, 201 Hillcrest Rd, New Holland PA 17557

Spirit Assembly are a 4-piece grungy, crunchy band from PA. They are young, excited, and show tons of promise. This is their first demo, five songs.

This just might be my favorite first demo in a long time. The songwriting and lyrics are surprisingly strong. Elements of Seattle, DC, and Guns N Roses?? Punk influenced, harmony-pop with a nasty kick in the ass.



STICKMAN

Hearing young bands like this reminds me why I got into this stuff. Worth check out. - Frank P.

STICKMAN - demo

884 Easter Dr, Westchester PA 19382

Stickman's second demo introduces their new singer Keith (ex-Stand Up, Freefall) and his breezy, emo-influenced vocals. The band's zippy, pop/punk tunes sound a lot like Freefall, actually, even though they were written before Keith joined the band - a throbbing bass punctuating tart, punchy melodies, a distorted but fluid lead guitar sound, and abundant harmonies. Kind of an East Coast version of the East Bay thing for you Lookout fans. - Jim T.

THERAPY - Demo

2916 Beach Ave, Venice CA 90291

This 9-song demo features some of the most original sounding hardcore tunes since 1983. The musicians are tight as hell, and even though the tape runs a little long, it never gets boring. What they could do without is the completely boneheaded lyrics. Get someone who can rant and rave with emotion instead of a Suicidal clone and they'll be something to write home about. - Ben W.

WHITEBREAD 8-song demo

Tie-dyed nerd rock about global warming, drug abuse, and girls, set to Wonder Bread white funk and chirpy garage-rock. It's music like this that gave the 60's a bad name. The band also sent along a 3-song demo that's beautifully produced but neglected to put their address on either tape. - Jim T.

YOUTH GONE MAD - demo

327 Bowery, New York NY 10003

Call it scum-rock or punk or whatever - Youth Gone Mad's post-Ramones tunes are lots of fun no matter what label you hang on them. Actually these three tunes are less Ramones-damaged than earlier recordings I've heard, with a fuller guitar sound and more of a power-pop feel, especially with the female backup vocals. "Bobby Was A Martian" might be the dumbest lyric I've heard all year though. - Jim T.

27 VARIOUS

Up, CD

Clean/TwinTone

You can always tell when you're listening to really good 60's influenced rock 'n' roll; it's whenever you stop thinking about which band influenced this riff or that harmony and just sit back and wallow in great pop music. There aren't a lot of bands that can pull that off; Material Issue is one and Minneapolis' 27 Various is another. Singer/songwriter Ed Ackerson just seems to grow better at this each time out, coming up with clever new twists that keep his lyrics crisp and witty and the music sparkling and new. Okay, if you want influences, think Hollies, Kinks, Turtles and maybe a little vintage Emitt Rhodes. Or better yet, just think 27 Various. - Jim T.

AFGHAN WHIGS

Congregation, CD

Sub Pop

The Afghan Whigs' Greg Dulli moans and groans his way through Congregation like J Mascis on Vitamin B -- not quite as flaccid and whiney as Dino Jr's trademark yowl, but pretty damn close. Ditto for the guitars, which have a little more punch than most Sub Pop product (better than Mudhoney, not quite Nirvana). Dulli doesn't have a lot to say, and most of what you can make out is depressing ("you've got me figured out/now we're both disappointed"). Give 'em a couple of punk points for not moving to Seattle (heck, these gomers ain't even from Cleveland, they're from Cincinnati) but that's about the biggest endorsement this Whig party will get outta me. - Jim T.

AGNOSTIC FRONT

One Voice, CD

Relativity

You know what makes me ill? Knowing that sludge like this still sells. I did have fun laughing at the group photo though. - Danny Jr. Isn't it great how AF's Roger Miret went to jail on a coke possession rap and now he's some kind of First Amendment martyr? Anyway, he sure didn't take diction lessons in the pen. And the new guitar player doesn't show off enough to make Vinny Stigma jealous (even tho he looks like he could beat Vinnie up with one massive bicep tied behind his back). But they don't recite the Pledge Of Allegiance on this album. I guess that's progress. - Jim T.

ANTIETAM

Comes Alive!, CD

Triple X

Ex-Louisville, ex-Hoboken, now New York City-based Antietam have always shredded the competition on stage but their albums always seemed to miss the mark. So here's a live album and guess what? Bullseye! Tara Key's awesome guitarwork stands right alongside Bob Mould and the Sonic Youthies as one of the great achievements of '80's indie rock in my book, her caterwaul vocals know no equal, and even the tunes from their last studio lp (which I found quite lame) sound great here. Play loud and melt a few brain cells. - Jim T.

ASEXUALS

Exile From Floontown, CD

Cargo

Solid guitar-college-rock with an occasional touch of country and blues. The scratchy, melodic vocals are the standout here. For fans of the Replacements, Soul Asylum and Doughboys. - Mike H.

BAD RELIGION

Generator, CD

Epitaph

Two staccato drumbeats and the whole band's right there in your face. That's how Bad Religion kick starts this album, with Greg Gaffin's snide vocals barking, "Like a rock, like a planet, like a fucking atom bomb." And it just builds from there. Nobody does

punk rock like Bad Religion anymore, strong and smart with lyrics that stick in your head and hooks you'll be humming for a week, all delivered with Gaffin's gutsy vocals and that wonderfully sardonic edge he brings to the band's best lyrics.

Reacting, no doubt, to some of the knocks Bad Religion has taken about their businesslike approach to music, Gaffin answers his critics in "No Direction:" "A righteous student came and asked me to reflect/he judged my lifestyle to be politically incorrect." His reply? "I don't believe in self-important folks who preach/no Bad Religion song will make your life complete." - Jim T.

THE BAGS

Night Of The Corn People, CD

Stanton Park

This starts off with two of the best "alternative" songs I've heard in a long time but then loses its punch. It has a folky/punk feel and it's rather slow throughout. This is their last album and no, they're not the old punk-rock Bags from L.A. - Danny Jr.



BEWITCHED

Harshing My Mellow, CD

No.6

Bob Bert's managed to put all his accumulated drum smarts into a goddamn drum machine; sad news for those of us who loved his drumming in Pussy Galore and Sonic Youth. But Bert's a singer now, the drum machine keeps the beat, and Bewitched rocks the house anyway. Part of it's the noisy, dense, throbbing buzz thrown up by guitarist Artie Reinitz, bassist Chris Ward, with Dave P scratching and sampling and generally making it sound real busy. But the best part of Bewitched are the lyrics -- funny, goofy, off the wall, or just plain weird. There's Bert and his pals Axl and "Mikey Stipe" going for the gold on "No.1," or the bad acid trip described in lush detail on "Orange Owsley." How 'bout a lyric sheet next time? And getting Steve Albini to produce this puppy was inspired. Who else knows more about making a drum machine sound like punk rock? - Jim T.

BIRD FROM MARS

Two Voices, Cassette

Red Planet, 2531 Sawtella Blvd, L.A. CA 90064

Try to imagine Redd Kross without the irony or camp and you get an idea of the beautifully-made pop this L.A. quartet produce. Deep rich soaring harmonies that recall the Everly Brothers glisten on every cut. A relaxing and enjoyable breath of fresh air from smoggy ol' L.A. - Jim T.

BONGWATER
The Big Sellout, LP
Shimmydisc

Kramer and Ann Magnuson team up for an album of weird cabaret-lounge jazz that's not nearly as funny as Magnuson's role as the bitchy magazine editor in TV. I feel like I should say more but nothing comes to mind, not even after three listens. - Jim T.

CAVEDOGS
Soul Martini, CD
Capitol

Where's the yummy ear candy of this Boston trio's first lp? Seems like they've gone all serious and studied, with dense, muddled lyrics and too many gooey hooks that sound like recycled radio jingles. All three guys have great voices, harmonize beautifully, and can play their instruments; that's not in question. The problem is the songwriting, not untypical for a young band's sophomore album ("you get 20 years to write your first record and six months to write your second," said a wise man once upon a time.) Keep "Boy In The Plastic Bubble" and lose the rest (especially the ones that bassist Brian Stevens sings and presumably wrote, since he's gone the most bubblegum), and for gosh sakes, there are THREE syllables in "arrowheads," not two. - Jim T.

CLOCKHAMMER
Klinefelter, CD
First Warning

Clockhammer are somewhat the Rush of alternative music - with impressive musicianship and eclectic songwriting. On a technical level, this is very enjoyable, but the song structures are so diverse, jumping from thrash to a Latin beat, I could see how someone might become confused and annoyed by it all (especially if you were trying to dance to it). - Mike H.

COMMONWEALTH
Nepenthe, LP
Free Thought, Box 432, Glen Echo MD 20812

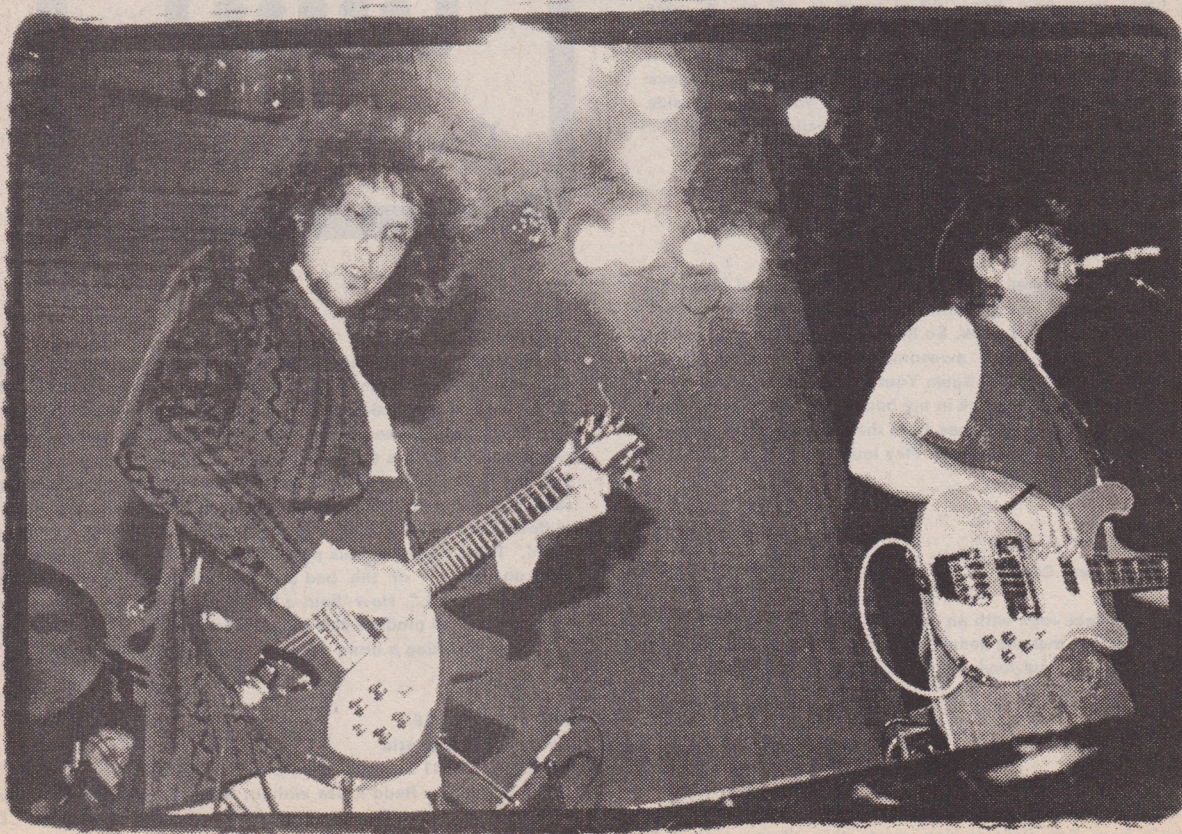
Out of the Baltimore area, The Commonwealth can dabble here & there and create songs with lots of changes. There surely is a DC influence, with the lead bass chords and guitar playing, but they're not attempting to ride anyone's coattails and this stands up on its own. Usually mid tempo'd and moody, there's an occasional outburst and rush to change the pace. It's the good musicianship, especially the bass, that makes you take notice. - Tom A.

DAG NASTY
Four On The Floor, CD
Dischord

The most pleasant surprise I've received in quite a while. After many rumors of some kind of Dag Nasty reunion, a full-length release was worked up by the original "Can I Say"-era lineup. This seems quite a feat in its own right, due to words that were exchanged in some post-Dag Nasty interviews. But fortunately, the four members happened to be in L.A. at the same time, and put aside their differences long enough to record this incredible ensemble of tunes. This actually sounds like it could be the album between "Can I Say" and "Wig Out A Denko's" - another classic from one of hardcore's most important bands. Brian Baker (appearing here under the name Dale Nixon), although now a slave to corporate rock, once again shines with his concise, influential guitar style. Dave Smalley's lyrics are as corny as ever, but only he can pull this off. We can only hope that they might do a few shows to support this. - Mike H.

DARKSIDE
Melomania, CD
Beggars Banquet

Okay, so they're from England and have the dumbest 'band name



CAVEDOGS

Photo by Michele Taylor

since Winger. Is that any reason not to give them a chance? You're right, but I managed to make it through this anyway. Of to be British AND a mope in 1992! Some good music has emerged from this whole "staring at your shoes" movement, but enough is enough. Next trend, please. - Des Jr.

DEN OF INIQUITY

Lovers And Other Monsters, CD

Den Of Iniquity, Box 936 Astor Sta, Boston MA 02123

A low-budget CD, with influences from the Doors and Moody Blues. Aside from that, this is a lush-sounding product that has a thick guitar backing to accompany its rhythmic backdrop. A fine effort. - Tom B.

D.O.A.

Bloodied But Unbowed/War On 45, CD

Restless

D.O.A. flew the punk rock banner from their home base of Vancouver, British Columbia from 1978 to the late '80's, but never got the kind of recognition they deserved. Part of that was poor distribution, a home town that made any out-of-town gig a major trip, and the fact that unlike their contemporaries (Black Flag, Circle Jerks, Minor Threat), D.O.A. never abandoned their basic three-chord, '77 punk rock approach for hardcore thrash.

This disc collects two long out-of-print records, the band's 1984 compilation Bloodied But Unbowed (originally released on CD Presents) and the "War On 45" EP. Listening to Joe Keithley (aka Joey Shithead) sing songs like "Fuck You," "Smash The State," and "I'm Right, You're Wrong" today reminds us of how much the band (indeed, all of punk rock) owed the Clash, but some of the political songs ("War In The East" and "Class War" from the "War On 45" EP,

and "America The Beautiful," about the Reaganite right-wing revolution) hold up remarkably well, and some of this shit ("Fuck You," "The Prisoner" and Shithead's great cover of "War") is timeless. If you never heard D.O.A. the first time around and think you know punk rock, you owe yourself a listen. - Jim T.

DOUGHBOYS

When Up Turns To Down, CD-5

Restless

Last year's Happy Accidents shoved Canada's Doughboys into the forefront of melodic hardcore bands, but this 5-song EP shows the band's moving towards a more alternative pop sort of sound, and the broader audience that suggests. The best song here actually is a cover ("What's Going On"), a frenzied pop ditty that reminds me of those power-pop bands like the Rubinoos and Earthquake that used to record for Beserkely Records back in the early 80's. There are two new Doughboys tunes here too, both powerful but more pop than hardcore (these guys used to get slammed for sounding too much like Husker Du and the Replacements; now they sound too much like 7 Seconds), a re-mix of "Deep End" from the Happy Accidents lp (with a grungier, more psychedelic, Flaming Lips-type feel) and an ill-conceived cover of the B-52's "Private Idaho." Cool shit if you find it at a good price, otherwise spend your bucks on the Happy Accidents CD. - Jim T.

DRIVE LIKE JEHU

Drive Like Jehu, CD

Headhunter/Cargo

This record has taken over my life, destroyed it... I can't listen to anything else. Drive Like Jehu reign from San Diego, with ex-members of Pitchfork and Rocket From The Crypt, wielding guitars as weapons, not as instruments. This is psycho shit -- amazing, beyond words. If you can find it, buy it, steal it, kill your friends for it. - Mike H.



DOUGHBOYS

Photo by Shawn Scallen

THE DUGANS

Bad Things Happen To Good People, CD
Blue Lunch, 275 Park Ave, Albany NY 12201

The Dugans make rock 'n roll that defies description. Not that I've never heard anything like this before. Au contraire! This record is SO non-descript, it almost defies comparison. Non-descript vocals, playing and production all add up to a record that I forgot while I still had it on. Sorry. - Des Jr.

E

A Man Called (E), CD
Polydor

Who is this man called E? Some reclusive genius who crawled out his basement studio with a disc full of brilliant pop songs, apparently. Maybe it's Todd Rundgren in disguise. Or Alex Chilton, finally returning to form. Or Robyn Hitchcock's busman's holiday... There are echoes of all those pop eccentrics here, with outrageous flashes of originality too, Brian Wilson-damaged harmonies, and witty lyrics that keep repeating in my head. Is "Fitting In With The Misfits" just the best song ever written about what it's like to discover "alternative" music or what? And "Nowheresville" is the best damn song about wanderlust since maybe Pet Sounds. Find this. Buy this. Play this. Love this. - Jim T.

FALSE PROPHETS

Invisible People, CD EP
Patois/Cargo

Here's a band that's been around longer than we have. One of New York's first hardcore bands (Lyle Hysen dubbed them "art-core" in Jersey Beat #1), the False Prophets have always been stridently political and musically eclectic. Singer/songwriter Stephan Ielpi leaps between musical genres as nimbly as he combines metaphors. "Never Again, Again" jumps from its "When Johnny Comes Marching Home" intro to an extended set piece that compares the bubonic plague of the Middle Ages to the AIDS epidemic. "Invisible People" examines the plight of the homeless ("I have seen the promised land/but it's been promised to someone else"). The music has a theatrical quality, with elements of punk, funk, and cabaret thrown together willy nilly, a challenging hodgepodge of ideas and that takes a few listens to absorb. - Jim T.

FLAMING LIPS

Yeah, I Know It's A Drag..., CD5
Warner Bros.

A complete surprise -- not at all the neo-psychedelia I had come to expect from these guys. The first track is incredible, with a driving rhythm section interlaced with doo wops dropped several octaves. The second track is a cool cover of two old Echo & The Bunnymen numbers. If this EP is a taste of things to come, this is a flavor I could crave. - Mike H.

FUNGO MUNGO

Humongous, CD
Island

Fungo Mungo is one of the many San Francisco Bay area funk/punk bands to pop (no pun intended) onto the major label, slaphappy scene in the past few years. Their big time debut is a surprisingly prime example of what to expect from this new crop of bands. But that's just the problem - this is exactly what I'd expect. Some songs are kind of metal, some are rhythmic, Chili Pepper-styled tunes about sex and soul brothers. All in all, they do know how to play their instruments and they do it rather well, just without any surprises. Not a bad party tape. - Danny Jr.

GREEN MAGNET SCHOOL

Blood Music, CD
Sub Pop/Genius

My editor always told me GMS were a great live band and that I should check them out. I never did, which I regret. But I can redeem

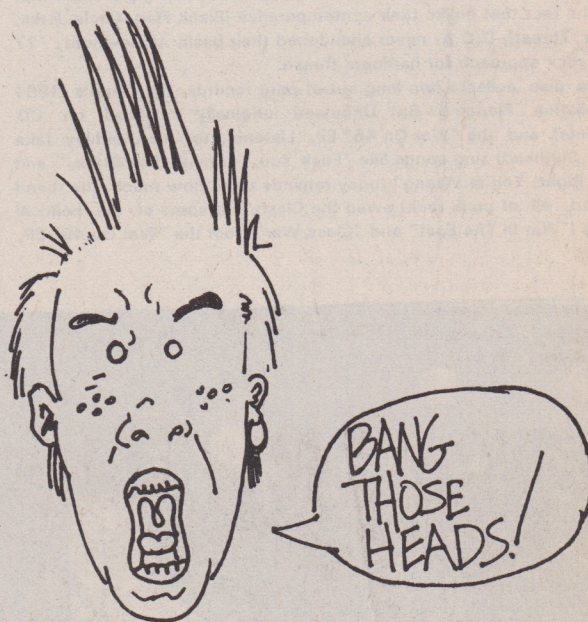
myself now, because this CD is great. I like long songs, and GMS write long songs. Not long, boring songs, mind you, but long songs that still seem as if they're only 3 minutes long. There's so much texture and sound to deal with, yet it sounds so simple - sometimes bordering on Sonic Youth guitar squalls, sometimes Fluid-style rock, the School will throw a curve to any listener to see "Sub Pop" and thinks "grunge."

Deep, heavy bass lines, a dash of white noise, and an underlying ominous tone sit underneath layers of stinging guitars and clear (mostly) vocals, with a few effects pedals (not just wah wah) thrown in. Okay, so they are a little grungy, but take away the distortion and you've got yourself one hot band anyway. - Jodi S.

GUTTERMOUTH

Full Length, LP
Dr Strange, Box 7000-117, Alta Loma CA 91701

Their single "Balls" didn't do much for me, and while this is better, it's just like an extended version of the 7 inch: upbeat punk with loads of humor that just doesn't cut it. But who knows, there's a chance you'll find it extremely funny. - Tom A.



HIGH BACK CHAIRS

Of Two Minds, CD
Dischord

Here's a real label-stereotype smasher. A POP record on Dischord? Yes, Virginia, and Jeff Nelso is the drummer. Now forget all that and listen to the eight great songs on this lp. It's a half hour you'll never forget.

There isn't a weak track on the album, all nice harmonies and melodies, cool guitar, nice vocals. It's like the best parts of Soul Asylum, Elvis Costello and Big Dipper all rolled into one band. The best thing anyone could do for these guys would be to doctor the sleeves and replace all the Dischord logos with Epic or Warner Bros. ones and send them to local rock stations like WNEW FM. If they can play shit like Baby Animals (which only gets airplay because it's on a major label), then why can't they play great pop music like this? - Jodi S.

HONEYMOON KILLERS

Hung For Low, CD
Fist Puppet, 3058 N Clybourn Ave, Chicago IL 60618

Beautiful noise...oh beautiful noise, bless you. Those simple guitar notes and those "what the fuck are you saying?" lyrics. Surfy beach music for city dwellers.

"Vanna White (Goddess Of Love)" and "Devil's Jump" could kill your elderly neighbor if played loud enough. "Whole Lotta Crap" is my favorite -- white noise guitar and screaming distorted mixed-low vocals add to this pounding mid-tempo toe tapper. Definitely my dose of noise for the week. Not for the uninitiated. - Frank P.

THE ICEMEN

"Rest In Peace," EP
Blackout

Like Agnostic Front and Sick Of It All, the Icemen refuse to go away. Instead, they lope around New York, knuckles dragging along the pavement, a two-fisted, tattooed anachronism from the days when their macho posturing and hate-inciting thrash ruled the scene. Nobody needs this shit in 1992; with song titles like "Rest In Peace" and "No Guts, No Glory" and lyrics that extol the virtues of violence, the Icemen seem like little more than a bad joke. And with no club in town willing to book this kind of crap anymore, they're a "New York/Hardcore" band in name only anyway. - Jim T.

JAWBOX

Novelty, CD
Dischord

Jawbox seems to pick up a little bit from every band they tour with. They've got that weird erotic harmony thing from Shudder To Think going in a few places, and a pounding, percussive anger on other songs that smacks of Helmet. What they really need, though, is more aggressive production; the mushy mix wastes the double guitars, since you can usually only hear one of them anyway, and Kim Colletta's bass really needs to be punched up. And Jay Robbins' vocals sound too dreary and monochromatic on too many cuts. Clearly this band is leaving the punk scene behind them and wants to move into the alternative marketplace (where they can play better clubs and make better money), which is fine, but they'll need to make more distinctive records if they want to start drawing an audience that's listening intently instead of moshing their brains out at every show. - Jim T.

JAZZ BUTCHER

Condition Blue, CD
Sky, 6400 Atlantic Blvd #220, Norcross GA 30071

I gave this one to Rodney on cassette and he couldn't figure out why there wasn't any jazz on it. But like me, he loved it. A riff, a hook, a nice piece of melody, it doesn't take a lot to write a perfect song but the Jazz Butcher knows how to put all the pieces together. "She's A Yo Yo" is what Robyn Hitchcock will sound like if he ever makes it onto Top 40 radio. For a guy who's got such a miserable love life (most of the songs are about getting dissed by women) the Jazz Butcher sure makes uplifting music. - Jim T.

THE LAST DRIVE

Blood Nirvana, CD
Restless

Punk bands from Athens are nothing new, unless they're from Athens, Greece. The Last Drive, like a lot of Euro punkers, wear their influences on their sleeve - Billy Idol, rockabilly, and the Dolls are all obvious heroes to these guys. But the 'Drive do the 70's punk-rock thing ("Bite," "Sweet Thing") at least as well as English posers like Birdland, and while their cover of "Time Has Come Today" might not overshadow the Ramones' or Angry Samoans', it's certainly got the right spirit. But how do you say "Oil" in Greek? - Jim T.

LUSH

Spooky, CD
4AD/Reprise

Lush's first real full-length LP is no less beautiful than their compilation of single tracks, *Gala*, but it does have some shortcomings. There aren't as many ear-grabbing songs here, but Micki and Emma sing so sweetly, you won't care. "Nothing Light" Mark II - not too melodic, not too monotonous, just steeped in delicate vocals and a pulsing bass. Other highlights are "For Love," the effects-laden "Superblast," and the moody "Monochrome." More accessible to WDRE listeners than My Bloody Valentine but not as oh-so-sidely British dance-pop as EMF or Carter USM, Lush offers up a nice slice of noise/pop for us suckers to enjoy. - Jodi S.



JAWBOX

Photo by Jim Testa

CHRIS MARS

Horseshoes & Hand Grenades, CD
Polydor

The Replacements' original drummer becomes the first 'Mat with a major label solo album. Cool tunes, clever lyrics, surprisingly adept musicianship (Mars played most of the instruments himself) but it takes a real effort to get past the vocals; the guy sings like Ray Davies with strep throat and an ear infection. - Jim T.

MIGHTY MIGHTY BOSSTONES

More Noise & Other Disturbances, CD
Taang!

The Bosstones flexed their metal muscles on a recent EP but on their new album, it's back to their trademark sound - ska, that bouncy skittish British beat, backed by the Bosstones' cool horns and heavy vocals. The only time they stray from ska is on "What's At Stake," which sounds like the Rollins Band with a major horn section, and the heavier-than-usual "Guns And The Young." "They Came To Boston," in which the band bitches about Beantown's tourists, is a riot. - Jim T.

MIRACLE LEGION

Drenched, CD
Morgan Creek

Miracle Legion's latest album is sort of a contradiction in terms - a clever and imaginative pop album. What makes this work is the way the songs are put together, both lyrically and musically. On the surface, songs like "Snacks And Candy" and "Everything Is Rosy" look like they might have come out of the Cleaver family songbook, but they actually address serious subjects like urban violence and the KKK. Going in unexpected directions, lead singer Mark Mulcahy turns introspective in "So Good" and reveals the band's Irish roots (Pogues and Waterboys influence, especially) unpretentiously, often with tongue in cheek lyrics. These cool pop songs in a grunge-filled music world really hit the spot. - Dan L.

OLD SKULL

CIA Drug Fest, CD
Restless

Definitely platinum-bound. It's Old Skull's world, we just live here. Buy this or be square. These guys are the punkest third-graders anywhere. Rock on. - Danny Jr.

OLIVE LAWN

Sophomore Jinx, CD
Cargo

This reeks of Mudhoney musically, vocally...even down to the biker commentary and Jack Endino production. At least it's not a bad imitation. - Mike H.

PEGBOY

Strong Reaction, LP
Touch & Go

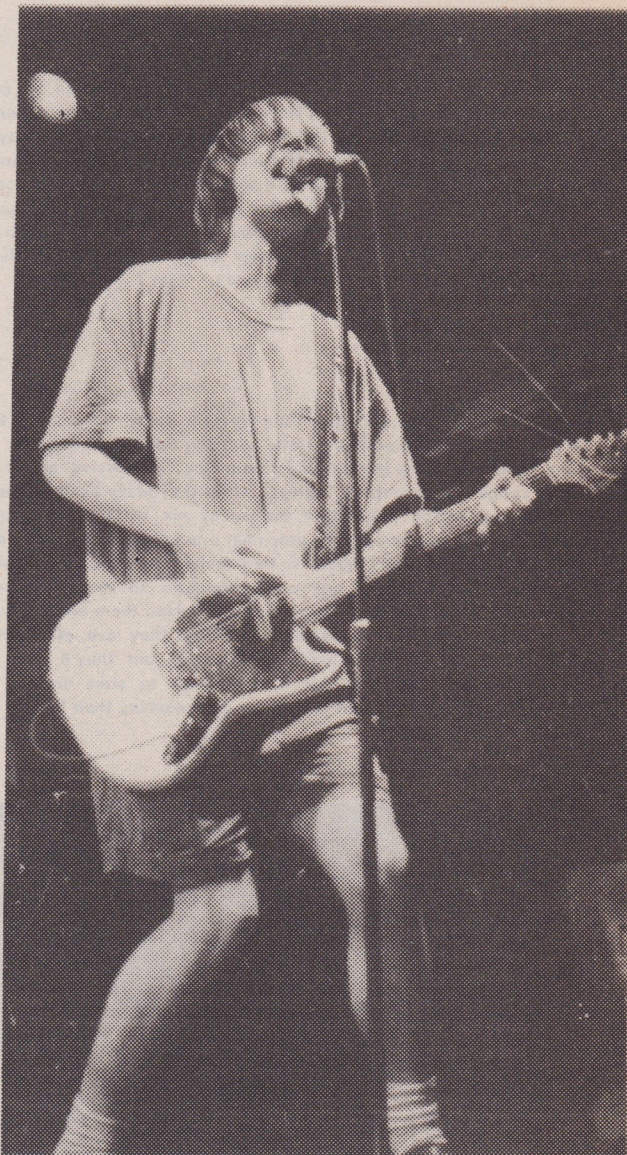
Although through the record, every song's mechanics are similar, Pegboy can really groove and blow you away -- like on the title track,

L7

Bricks Are Heavy
Slash

The reaction of critics and the public to all-female bands too often reminds me of Dr. Johnson's famous dictum about seeing a dog walk on its hind legs -- it's seldom done well, but one is so amused to see it done at all. So add L7 to the list of girls with guitars who suddenly (post-Nirvana, actually) find themselves labelled "foxcore" and the subject of the latest major label feeding frenzy. On the foxcore food chain, L7 are less shrill than Hole or Babes in Toyland, less heavy than the Lunachicks, and probably more accessible than any of those bands. Musically, they recycle simple riffs and chord changes, with occasionally clever lyrics. But if Bricks Are Heavy is any indication of the best L7 can do, then the band still lacks the ambition and killer instincts of a Bangles or Joan Jett that it'll take to turn ordinary grunge rock into a hit single. Sure, they rock; that's their best trait. But if four guys had made this album, they'd still be playing bars in their hometown. - Jim T.

"Not What I Want," and "Superstar," for example. Burly and husky guitars lead the attack, with drums and bass not far behind. It's probably pointless to mention, but this does remind me a bit of Bhopal Stiffs and Naked Raygun (ex-members of both are in Pegboy). About two songs sounded uninspired and fell on their face, otherwise this is well worth purchasing. - Tom A.



POSTER CHILDREN

Photo by Jim Testa

POI DOG PONDERING

Volo Volo, CD/EP

CBS

I don't have a clue what to call this -- partly instrumental, partly experimental, with some obvious pop influences but with jazz, reggae, punk, and various obscure mixed styles showing up. It's a miscegenation of music. - Rodney L.

POISON IDEA

Blank Blackout Vacant, CD

Taang

They will not go away. This Poison Idea CD refuses to let you up. It will kick you and beat you, then Pig Champion will come over and bellyflop on your head. Poison Idea may be the oldest Great American Punk Band left. Angst is in their blood, they have no choice - the band has to write songs this concerned, alarmed and pissy. Standout tracks include the opening cut, "Say Goodbye" (amazing opening guitar riff), and "Smack Attack," which possesses a start/stop choppy guitar part any band in Seattle would kill for. The band stays true to the "Poison Idea" heavy straightahead punk sound. Thick melodies, catchy hooks, great lyrics = another punk classic P.I. record which will live on as a punk standard. Recommended. - Frank P.

PUSSY GALORE

Corpse Love - The First Year, CD

Caroline

Pussy Galore took punk primitivism to new depths, as this compilation of early EP's, demos, live tracks and cassette releases show. Invariably fucked up to the point where he could barely stand, Jon Spencer's performances always made you wonder if he'd last through the set. Most listeners will find these tracks maddeningly incompetent -- the band spends more time trying to figure out the first chord than actually playing on most of these tracks -- but there are a couple of cuts from the classic, out to print "Exile On Main Street" cassette which are worth owning, and it's fun to compare this shit (Pussy Galore must have set a world's record for using the word "fuck" in more song titles in a year than any band in history) to what the Pussy's (Spencer, Cafritz, Bert, Hayden, etc) are up to today. But really, putting this noise on CD is kinda like using the space shuttle to deliver pizza. - Jim T.

RIDE

Going Blank Again, CD

Sire

On the album's first single and first track, "Love Them All Behind," a thundering bass and drums lead you straight through a barrage of layered guitar melodies and dreamy vocals. The remaining material is more diversified than their past releases, displaying their ability to write excellent pop songs. This album is proof that Ride are the best of England's crop of shaggy-haired guitar bands. - Mike H.

ROLLINS BAND

The End Of Silence, CD

Imago

I'm sure if Johnny Puke had turned his review of this album in on time, he'd have more interesting things to say. All I can tell you is that the major label production sounds like it's dulled, rather than sharpened, the band's attack (this is one rhythm section capable of giving you goosebumps and on this album, it doesn't happen). And 73 minutes of Henry ranting and raving is about 40 minutes more than I need, especially with four of these ten songs clocking in at over eight minutes apiece. Did I hear somebody say "self-indulgent?" - Jim T.

SEAM

Headsparks, CD

Homestead

Fans of droning, angst-filled dirge-rock like Galaxie 500 or Codeine

should get into this CD. If those bands don't ring a bell, try to imagine Superchunk on quaaludes (with Superchunk's singer on drums, no less). - Jim T.

SEBADOAH

Sebadoah III, CD

Homestead

I've never been a fan of Dinosaur Jr. All throughout my musically formative years, my friends would force open my ears, scoop out the wax, and pour Dino Jr into my eardrums, arguing that it was good for me, that I needed culture, etc. After a number of eustachian tube infections and a growing hatred for lethargic songwriting, I decided to start using high-powered weaponry anytime a Dino Jr album got anywhere near my stereo. So when Sebadoah came across my speakers, my immediate urge was to dust off the ol' MAC-10 and get a little target practice. This is a folkier, tie-dyed -- read, "kinder and gentler" -- more ethereal Dinosaur Jr. In fact, this CD gets so ethereal at times that it becomes indistinguishable from Syd Barrett-era Pink Floyd. The lyrics are slightly amusing at times, but straining to decipher them under flat whining vocals takes away any potential fun. This'll most probably be scarfed up by Sonic Youth fans upset by their mentor's newfound popularity. - Leif H.

SENSELESS THINGS

The First Of Too Many, CD

Epic

England's answer to the Doughboys? Clean, upbeat pop/punk that will keep your head nodding. I'm sure this will be one of the year's best releases by a major label. The first, and hopefully not the last, of too many. - Mike H.

SHADES APART

Dude Danger, EP

Sunspot, Box 7453, Arlington VA 22207

Two or so years after their excellent lp on Wishingwell comes a new 6-song service of South Jersey's Shades Apart. More of their melodic, twisted (and emo-ish) punk with cool changes throughout the songs. "Feels so good to bellyache/it's gonna be one of those days" - yeah, as expected, good introspective lyrics to accompany the songs. Moreso on this lp than their last, Shades Apart creates a dark mook in their songs that makes them a bit different from what you might expect. I wish they would play out a bit more though. - Tom A.



SKINYARD

1000 Smiling Knuckles, LP
Cruz

Jack Endino - the underground's most cunning venture capitalist - has handed down yet another steaming piece of vinyl to his psycho power hypnotized-Sub-Pop legions. The fact remains that this record is crap, hyped up by good promotion and unredeemable except perhaps for quelling Seattle's angry acidhead crowds. Shoot 'em now, shoot 'em now. - Leif H.

SOUTHERN CULTURE ON THE SKIDS

Too Much Pork For Just One Fork, CD
Moist, Box 3597, Chapel Hill NC 27515

One of the most entertaining live acts to ever grace a stage comes to my CD player. They insist they play "toe sucking geek rock," they've been called "swamp-boogie psychobilly," "voodoo Cramps country-chicken music," and have left some listeners dancing around in my living room like struttin' fools. Cross GREEN ACRES with a downhome cookin' country backwoods cookbook and set to music. More bands need to make honest music like this. Bassist Mary Huff and drummer Dave Hartman complement Rick Miller's swampy guitar masterfully. Everyone in America should buy this and make S.C.O.T.S. replace Bruce Springsteen on the charts. - Frank P.

SPRAWL

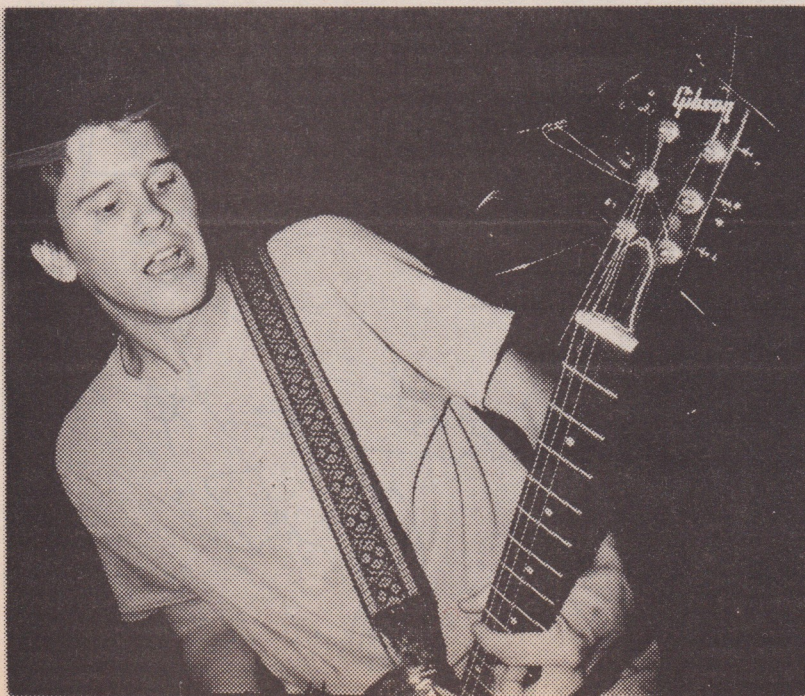
The Deflorist, cassette lp
RWE, 2140 Lexington Ave, Houston TX 77089

Funk/punk is getting so old that it's funny to see another wannabe Chili Peppers band come along and try to get rich. So while this does provide about 40 minutes of comic relief, that's about it. Musically they're more than competent but you know what to expect. - Danny Jr.

SSD

Power, CD
Taang

SSD were Boston's hardcore pioneers, one of the first early HC bands to "go metal." Today, metalcore is so commonplace that it's hard to remember what a big fucking deal it was back in 1983, but this compilation of early EP's, demos, and live tracks brings it all back. Even I didn't remember how Kiss-influenced these guys were at one point! Sheesh. A piece of punk rock history you ought to own if you care about this music, dudes. - Jim T.



SUPERCHUNK

Tossing Seeds (Singles 89-91), LP
Merge

Superchunk's commitment to the DIY aesthetic means that some of their best tunes debuted as self-released singles (on the band's Merge label) before they wound up on the two better-produced Matador albums. So if you think "Slack Motherfucker" or "My Noise" sound noisy and anarchic on the lp's, wait until you hear the singles versions. There are also a few cool covers worth having, including "Train From Kansas City," which the band used to encore with quite a bit. If you're the type that prowls the singles bins at the local mom 'n pop record shop, you might already have these, but I'm betting you don't. So if you want to hear the sloppiest, liveliest, loveliest punk band around these days, here's a good way to catch up. - Jim T.

TALL DWARFS

Weeville, CD
Homestead

A lot of people have said that Chris Knox can do no wrong. I can't guarantee that, but I can guarantee that Weeville is about as right as you can get. It's an aptly named record, from the artwork right down to the sounds within. Most of the time, the Dwards sound like two kids experimenting with different household noises, like hitting floors and such; other times, they can be the kid next door, playing guitar thru a shitty amp. It's almost hard to believe it's just two guys doing all (Alec Bathgate is Knox' partner in crime). Some of the best songs are the haunting/creepy ones like "Log" and "Skin Of My Teeth," but don't take my word for it. Listen for yourself. Tall Dwarfs don't sound like every other New Zealand band. Thank god. - Jodi S.

TINY LIGHTS

Stop The Sun I Want To Go Home, CD
Doctor Dream

Hoboken's Tiny Lights must live on a diet of rose petals and moonbeams, that's how trippy and light the delicate and enchanting songs on their new lp (their first for L.A.'s Dr. Dream Records) come across. Sometimes things get too sweet for my taste; "Sugar" will induce diabetic coma if listened to repeatedly, and "Planet Love" sounds like a lost song from the "Godspell" soundtrack. But there's enough funky guitar, soaring cello, and jiggly percussion on most tracks to offset the hippie love vibes. - Jim T.

TVTV\$

Brainwashing, CD
Flipside

Not nearly as good as I'd expected, rather below par, actually. A speedy emo-core sound with highly political lyrics and lots of power chords. If you're a fan, you might enjoy it but side B is really pretty bad. - Danny Jr.

UNDEAD

Live Slayer, cassette
Screaming Skull

This lp was supposedly titled in response to Slayer's "Live Undead" lp, in case you missed the joke, mixed in Bobby Steele's apartment and recorded on a four-track during the disastrous Fiendz/Undead tour last year (see last issue's interview for gory details). I always liked the Undead's music, songs that sound like classics of early punk, with catchy singalong choruses. Bobby is now playing out alone, with backing tracks on a Midi. - Tom B. and Jim T.

SUPERCHUNK

Photo by Shawn Scallen

UNREST

Imperial f.f.r.r., CD
Teen Beat/No.6

Unrest have always been a hard band to pin down, because they rarely do the same thing twice. Like the best experimental bands (The Ex, Negativland) you can never predict what's coming next. So, keeping that in mind, I put on Imperial not expecting anything, and expecting everything. After a string of singles (the excellent "Skinhead Girl" among them) of varying quality, this lp came as a refreshing surprise. For one thing, it's consistent - in quality, if not in form (although all the songs are more or less pop songs). Where the band has leaned toward cheesy metal in the past, you'd never know it from the quiet simplicity of this CD's title track, or the harmonies in "I Do Believe You Are Blushing." Maybe they've traded in their Kiss records for Galaxie 500 and Slowdive EPs? They haven't abandoned their penchant for strange noises and experiments though.

Most of all, though, this is a warm-sounding pop record that rivals ANY of the shit you hear on the radio, see on MTV, or find filling the racks of your local record store. I want to take this record home to my mother. I want to be nice to my ex-boyfriend. I want to dance barefoot in Central Park. And after you journey into Mr. Robinson's neighborhood, you'll want to also. - Jodi S.

WEEN

The Pod, double LP
Shimmydisc

The liner notes explain that this double lp was taped on a home recorder while the band was doing double-bong hits of Scotchguard, and it certainly sounds like it. No two songs even remotely resemble each other and a lot of them don't even resemble songs. Unless you're deeply steeped in the Ween mystique, I'd recommend you check out the TwinTone double-lp (if you can find one) first. On the other hand, if you only listen to music through headphones when you're so stoned that your eyes don't focus anymore, then this is definitely for you. - Jim T.

YO LA TENGO

May I Sing With Me?, CD
Alias

Another label jump for Hoboken's coolest musical export, and with that jump comes a few others. The addition of bassist James McNew (ex-Christmas) is one. And embracing a new sound is another. The lineup change makes a big difference too, because James is not just along for the ride. He sings and even co-wrote a song or two. This new element sounds right at home and completes Yo La Tengo's sound. If you thought their last lp (the quirky covers compilation Fakebook) was the sound of things to come, then this will come as a surprise. Altho the feedback chaos of old is still here (like in "Mushroom Cloud Of Hiss"), melody prevails -- and beautifully. There are acoustic tinges to almost everything, and the songs themselves sound like they were written without even considering the electric current. Ira and Georgia's vocal harmonies are better than ever, too. This record's a lot like the new Unrest lp -- warm and consistently great, and by the finest record the band has done. If you've never heard Yo La Tengo before, this is the best place to start. - Jodi S.

LIVE AT THE SQUARE, compilation CD Square

A live compilation of Miami bands, ranging from gothic to rockabilly to bad commercial rock. The only good track is by Quit, a raging pop/punk trio. I'm sure Miami has better bands to offer; at least, I would hope so. - Mike H.

THE VIOLENCE INHERENT IN THE SYSTEM

A Noise For Heroes Compilation of Euro Rock Bands
NKVD, 5310 Bragg St, San Diego CA 92122

A fine collection of 22 underground rock 'n roll bands which happen to sing in English and come from all over Europe. I suppose I was expecting more punk or Oi stuff. What a pleasant surprise! While



WEEN

Photo by Jim Testa

some bands like Dead Allison from Finland kicked me in the teeth with high-energy gritty punk rock, most of the bands show exceptional talent and produce GREAT "rock." Sing-along-after-one-listen kind of stuff, mid-tempo, easy to fall in love with rock songs. Frank P.

MAJOR POTENTIAL COMPILATION #1

50 Music Square West, Music City TN 37203

This is an impressive undertaking, with songs from 16 groups which cover virtually the entire spectrum of alternative music. At least from a Southern perspective. These are all groups who are hoping to be signed to a major label and I'd say a number of them have the potential to succeed: The Shindigs, Stikki Wikkit, Suede Tattoo and Lost Dogs stood out for me. Good way to check out some down south music. - Rodney L.

THE GREENWICH VILLAGE FOLK FESTIVAL 1989-1990

Gadfly, PO Box 6603, New York NY 10128

Truthfully, I expected this to be something in the punk comedy vein. To my surprise, it's actually folk music. Even more to my surprise, it's good stuff. A dozen different artists, from Guy Davis (who does a "walking blues" that really is) to Tom Paxton (great comedy song called "Yuppies In The Sky"). A cool release. Rodney L.

WE BITE AMERICA: The Collection, CD

We Bite, PO Box 10172, Chicago IL 60610

We Bite America specializes in German punk-rock imports along

with a few American bands they export to Europe. Here's the whole roster, from New York's Crawlappy to Italy's Negazione to a whole passel of German bands who provide an interesting melting pot of punk rock riffs and accents. A good way to check out this label's roster and also hear what punk rock sounds like in German. - Jim T.

ON A CLEAR DAY YOU CAN SEE BYRON - A DeKalb Compilation, CD
% Russel Schenke, 1935 S Plum Grove Rd, Palatine IL 60067

And here I always thought DeKalb was a suburb of Chicago, not Seattle. Goes to show what I know. Seriously, of the seven grungy garage-bands on this local-scene compilation, only Gasoline threw off any serious sparks. And anyway, everyone knows Champaign is the real hot-bed of Midwestern punk these days. - Jim T.

SOMETHING'S GONE WRONG AGAIN - The Buzzcocks Cover
Compilation, lp
C/Z

Here's a tribute album that should have been a blast -- lots of cool bands doing Buzzcocks tunes, right? But it didn't provide nearly half as many goosebumps as I expected. Maybe because all the bands on side one -- Doughboys, Fluid, Coffin Break, Didjits, and Electric Love Hogs -- sorta sound like the same band? Or maybe it's because I love the originals so much that I don't need to hear post-mod weirdos like Alice Donut reinterpret them. - Jim T.

--BOOKS--

MUSICIAN MAGAZINES GUIDE TO TOURING AND PROMOTION
(\$5.95)

Although this guide isn't necessarily directed to a punk/hardcore market, it does offer some good information on touring, listing clubs, music and record stores, radio stations,, and so on around the country and Canada. The magazine is well laid out and each club listing includes the style(s) of music prevalent at that venue, as well as helpful booking suggestions. There's also a somewhat humorous list of Do's and Don't's for touring, compiled by members of bands, A&R people, and various other music types -- many of these, I'm sure, will hit home to those who have toured. - Mike H.



(Top) TINY LIGHTS and BEWITCHED
(photos by Michele Taylor)

7 YEAR BITCH 7"

Face The Music, Box 1812, Olympia WA 98507

This is an Olympia band that sounds similar to late-period Black Flag. They're one of the only all-girl punk bands I've heard that has a vocalist who doesn't sound like a weenie. Lyrically, they're talking about creepy guys giving them the eye, war, and a girl named Lorna. This is pretty strong stuff, with great production and a cool Marilyn Monroe picture sleeve. Definitely worth checking out. - Ben W.

ANTI-SEEN - "My God Can Beat Up Your God" 7"

Dog Meat

This is way better than the "Psycho Killer" 7" but not as good as their "Fuck Y'All" single. Anti Seen are best live and this single is in fact a live recording. The A side is a cool tune with great chorus; the flip, "Surfin' Free Bird," is a rave freakout jam that pretty much works. If you dig the AntiSeen scene, then this one's for you. - Des Jr.

ASSUCK - "Anticapitol" 12" EP

Sound Pollution, Box 17742, Covington KY 41017

More PC grindcore. But wait, there's only a drummer, a guitarist, and a vocalist. What's going on here? These guys show a lot of economy and precision with what they do, and actually, it's not bad at all. There are 17 cuts on this EP and it's maybe 15 minutes long. I have to say, though, that I can't get behind this Swallow-Drano-And-Scream style of singing that's prevalent in this genre. That said, this is angry shit and Rob Proctor is perhaps one of the finest drummers in metal. It's not for everyone (including me) but if you know what you're getting into, then this is very good. - Des Jr.

AZALIA SNAIL/SEBADOH Split 7" EP

Dark Beloved Cloud, 5-16 47th Rd #3L, Long Island City NY 11101

Some guy who looked like Clark Kent handed me this 7-inch in Maxwells one night, and while I'm not a big fan of either of these bands, I'm glad he did. The only word that describes both sides of this 5-song EP is "homemade." Azalia Snail do it on "St. Nowhere" with intimate acoustic guitar and female vocals which sound as if they're playing at the wrong speed. "U.M.O." is more of an experimental instrumental with spoken vocals that sound like they're coming out of a telephone. Sebadoh's three songs focus on Eric Gaffney's more pop side, especially the improvised third cut, all sounding as if the band was sitting around your bedroom playing you this stuff. Nice. - Jim T.

BOORISH BOOT - EP

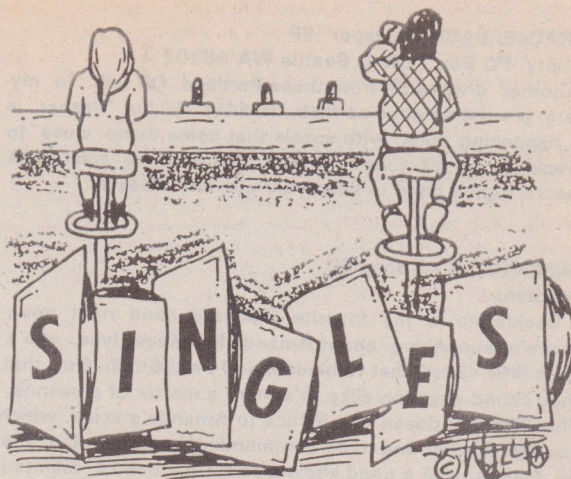
Black & Blue, 400D Putnam Pke #152, Smithfield RI 02917

From the label that brought you some classic G.G. Allin comes Boorish Boot, with some righteous Old School-influenced punk. Nothing special, just energetic and kinda raw -- and with a song, "Geffen," about Cher's daughter signing to Geffen Records because of her mom. How can you not like this? - Tom A.

BRATMOBILE - "Kiss & Ride"

Homestead

Without a doubt, this is the perfect label for Bratmobile. Just annoying minimalist garbage-garage music. - Tom A.



BROKEN TRUST - Straight Edge Across America Depression, Box 219, Battle Creek MI 49016

I guess this is an anti-straight edge band. They're real metallic and feature really fast songs with what could be the worst production I've ever heard. They play too fast to keep up with themselves and the six songs kinda blur together to form one continuous mass of noise that sounds vaguely like your downstairs neighbor cranking Slayer too loud through the floorboards. - Ben W.

BUZZOVEN - "Wound" EP

Allied, Box 460683, San Francisco CA 94146

North Carolina's entry into the slow & heavy sweepstakes is Buzzoven, from Charlotte. Sludge-wise, these guys can pour it on like molten lead erupting from an Antarctic glacier. I would say they're NC's best metal hope since COC went merish, and brothers and sisters, that's a good thing. As long as these guys don't go "Blind"... Also, this record is on the PC Allied label (home of Antischism and Fuel) but don't let that fool you. Melvins fans should check this out. - Des Jr.

CANDY MACHINE - 7" EP

Baltimore's finest, upbeat punk similar to Naked Raygun. The corrugated cardboard cover is innovative, but it's somewhat difficult for the buyer to know what they're purchasing. But if you know what to look for, but it. - Mike H.

COMMONWEALTH - 3 song EP

Free Thought, 5219 Wyome Rd, Bethesda MD 20816
I'm still pissed at Commonwealth for blowing off their ABC No Rio show in April without bothering to call first (like I couldn't have done something more useful that Saturday afternoon than wait for them to show up), but I still like this 3 song EP. Dave Ort's matter-of-fact vocals and the band's knack for catchy melodies stand out, but these guys have to learn how to mix a record so the overly busy bass, guitar and drums don't keep tripping over one another. - Jim T.

CRACKERBASH - "Jasper" EP

Empty, PO Box 12034, Seattle WA 98102

Another diverse EP from these Portland, OR folk. To my ears, it's not as good as their "Holiday" EP but "Jasper" is a happening tune, with vocals that come damn close to breaking out of tune. All in all, this is still a solid little record from a band to keep your eye on. - Des Jr.

DESIDERATA - 3 song EP

Dischord

Desiderata is my favorite Dischord band right now. There's something about Amanda MacKaye (yes, she's Ian's little sister) that reminds me of Patti Smith. Not that they sound anything alike, it's more a matter of presence. This EP really doesn't do justice to Amanda's voice, which sounds huskier and more commanding in person, but the EP does provide a good showcase for the band's talented (and very young) musicians (there's a bass solo on "Walking In My Sleep" that'll make your ears pop). The Inner Ear production provides the usual snap, crackle and pop, and the picture sleeve and lyric insert make for one of the most attractive 7-inch packages from Dischord in recent memory. - Jim T.



DESIDERATA

DIRT - "Rugburn"/"Heavy Petting" 7"

Worrybird Disk, Box 95485, Atlanta GA 30347

Dirt are one of the noisiest bands to ever come out of the South. The musicians bring down fiery hail on top of a singer who's being chased around the room by a Tasmanian devil. It's the end of the world as we know it and I've got a stiffy. Get hip to these guys now 'cause this is the shit. - Des Jr.

DOG TIRED - German import 7"

24 McKinley Ave, E Hanover NJ 07936

The first song, "We Can't Be Friends," is one of those "instant goose bump" songs. That opening guitar bit gets me every time. Other than that, Dog Tired have really impressed me with this, my first time hearing them. It's fun to discover a hidden local band. Their music reminds me of mid-life Sticks And Stones, although S&S are one of the very few Jersey bands not on their "thank you" list on the sleeve.

DOGBOWL - "Drunk Every Night" 7"

Vital, Box 20247, NYC 10028

Dogbowl is the man who made King Missile everything that ISN'T these days. Ahem. Now with the eternally important Vital Music single, Mr Bowl presents us with two great examples of his disturbing yet charming noise. It'd suggest this single to fans of pre-Atlantic Records King Missile and anyone else who happens to be looking for some weird fucking music. - Mike L.

ED HALL - "Deth" 7"

Trance

"Deth" is a stupid Kiss parody and "Witless Tilt" is a bad B-hole Surfers ripoff. Overall, this pretty much sucks. - Des Jr.

FLYING SAUCER - 7"

Homestead

Someday, modern science may discover a cure for whatever disease that Homestead Records managed to catch. Until then, my recommendation is a swift kick in the pants for shamelessly releasing garbage like this. - Mike L.

FOREHEAD - "G" EP

Rotz, 17 No Elizabeth, Chicago IL 60607

I think this band is from Switzerland. It's not really clear and there are about 50 label logos on the sleeve. I don't know why it took so many people to release this EP. The packaging is really nice and the music is pretty good too. They claim to be influenced by Rollins but thankfully it doesn't show. It's weird, heavy stuff, the kind of gut-wrenching music that the Melvins and Helmet probably make (I wouldn't know). Anyway, I wouldn't but this but I probably won't sell it either. - Ben W.

GAUGE - "Blank" EP

Box 9711, Downers Grove IL 60515

What could easily be just another generic, emo-type release from young men in knee-length baggies actually turns out to be a wonderfully inventive slab o' vinyl. Gauge gain distinction by putting unexpected twists on both the vocal and guitar lines. Case in point: The tricky guit intro on "Nonetheless." Worth your money. - Des Jr.

GOD IS MY CO-PILOT - "On A Wing & A Prayer" EP
Funky Mushroom, Box 100270, Brooklyn NY 11210

The jagged, jerky rhythms and brain-damaged vocals of downtown NYC's God Is My Co-Pilot take us back to the days of "No Wave," when funky bohemians like the Bush Tetrads were all the rave. You gotta love a band that can throw 5 songs at you in under eight minutes! Three of the four people on this record aren't in the band anymore, though, according to the inner sleeve. - Jim T.

GREAT WHITE LYIN' SNAKE - "Unplugged Terror" 7"
HCR, Box 27532, Providence RI 02907

The first few seconds had me believing this was a Buttholes "Lady Sniff" sort of cheese, until it lasted for five minutes. This IS the coolest single for the winter of 1992. Continuous loops of everything from puking, farting, and the Beastie Boys' "Yeaah!" to more farting, moaning, and more spitting and puking. Just the fact that someone pressed this onto a one-sided single for consumption makes it more punk than using egg whites to hold up your Manic Panic-colored mohawk. - Tom A.

GUNK - 4 song EP

Significant, PO Box 1113, Camp Hill PA 17001

Gunk are a cool punk band from Connecticut, with a style you could call post-emo-core: Impassioned vocals, chugga chugga guitars, and overwrought lyrics about personal relationships filled with cliches ("the words are left unsaid," "slips thru your fingers like grains of sand," "look beyond the darkness to see the light," and so on). It doesn't sound like much on paper but done well by a band like Gunk (or NJ's Greyhouse) it works. - Jim T.

HEADWOUND - "The E.P." 4-song EP

Burnt, 53 Myrtle Ave, Midland Park NJ 07432

So punk is dead, huh? Try telling that to these mooks -- a big fat drunken rudeboy named Choppie on vocals, a drummer named Johnny Hate, and - holy shit! - my old pal Harry Baggs on guitar. (Harry used to do a great zine called Earwax.) In its way, this EP is nothing short of brilliant, four songs that perfectly express an entire way of life -- bumfuck post-punk burnouts in the age of Reaganomics. Like all good Oi, the songs are all about getting drunk and the choruses sound like something hordes of skinheads would chant at a football game, and the lyrics are nothing short of brilliant: "There's a dozen girls for every one of you/you don't need no brains to do what they do/there's a hundred guys with the same dumb smile/it's not out of the way, it's only half a mile" goes the one about their favorite bar, "Tuck-A-Buck." And the song about "Bergen County," well, here, you decide: "My socks are loose/my shoes aren't tied/what became of family pride?/Looks like it just up and died...round here...In Bergen County!" - Jim T.

HELL NO - 4-song EP

Wardance, 35-18 93 St, Jackson Hts NY 11372

One of the more musical offerings to come out of the ABC No Rio experience, Hell No brings together a lot of familiar faces (assuming you hang out at ABC No Rio) playing a lot of familiar sounding music. Anti-authoritarian lyrics, rapidfire drums, and just-this-side-of-metal punk guitars thrash away, and away, and away. A partial list of other bands these guys have been in: Citizen's Arrest, Animal Crackers, Go, and Chisel. - Jim T.



GAUGE

HEMI - "No Jesus" 7"

Big Money, PO Box 2483 Loop Stn, Minneapolis MN 55402

I have three Hemi 45's (two of which I paid for) and I dig 'em all. This one is the best so far. These guys are chunky like Helmet but more forward propulsive and less heavy. Plus their lyrics are less dopey. Music to get speeding tickets to. They must be awesome live. Get it. - Des Jr.

IS THIS BOB? - 7"

Plumb, 1127 Commonwealth Ave #14, Allston MA 02134

Something's gone seriously wrong in Boston...it must be all the colleges or something. Naturally this is lamely marketed as "alternative" and just as naturally, it's mainstream wimpy pop dogshit. This waste of vinyl is offensive in its blandness. Please gimme a break with this stupid college hobby band crud. - Ben W.

JAWBOX - "Tongues" 7"

Dischord

An ideal band delivers two more new songs as a teaser to their forthcoming album. Jawbox have developed their songwriting to a craft unmatched by any other alternative, punk, post-punk band. Production by Ian Burgess brings out the guitar power many said was lacking on their last lp, Grippe. If you don't like Jawbox, I don't like you.
- Mike H.

JUST SAY NO 7"

Staple Gun, Box 867262, Plano TX 75086

This is the Michigan band that doesn't let you forget that they have a member who was in the Meatmen. Rather appropriate, because this sounds like the last Meatmen record, which was supposed to lampoon cock rock and instead ended up sounding exactly like it. I guess some people are into this - heavy rock and roll riffs with "rebellious" lyrics. For me, I just imagine a bunch of balding, fat men desperately trying to recapture their glory days in high school. Art collectors may desire the Pettibone sleeve. - Ben W.

**THE MAD SCENE - "Falling Over, Spilling Over" EP
Homestead**

Somewhere between the third release by Daniel Johnston and the second from Weird Paul, I got very leery of anything that said "Homestead" on it. Happily, I can report this EP isn't bad, although it is, yet again, another example of that preciously twee minimalist pop that Mr. Katkin seems to like so much. Lead singer Hamish Kilgour (ex-Clean, Bailter Space, so we're talking New Zealand-type twee pop here) has apparently married an American

gal and moved to Hoboken, but he hasn't lost that annoying droll (i.e. not funny) sense of humor that only Fred Mills and Gerard Cosloy seem to appreciate. So forget "Falling Over, Spilling Over" - it's droll, it's twee, it annoyed me. The two songs on the B side sound much better, with rapid Wire-like minimalist guitar/bass doodlings and a nice vocal turn by Mrs. Kilgour, Lisa Siegel. If these guys turn up in your neighborhood live, the band now includes ex-Ex Lion Tamer John Tanzer. - Jim T.

MICKY FINN - EP

Big Money

This is noisy, the way I like music these days, but it doesn't crush my brainpan the way the better noise bands do. The instrumental cut is fairly nifty, but this record isn't going to be seeing much time on my turntable. - Des Jr.

MOUSE - 7"

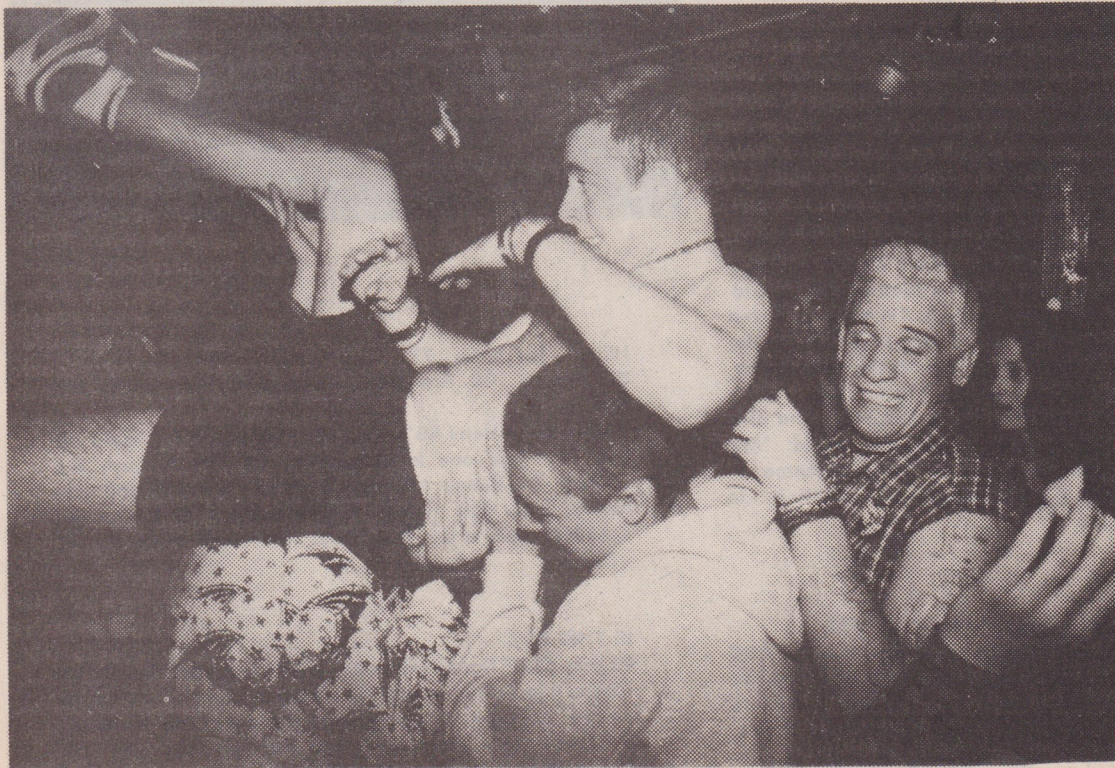
Worrybird, Box 95485, Atlanta GA 30347

For some incomprehensible reason, these people sent this to my attention. They must have confused me with someone else because dirge-like, plodding rock tunes are not my favorite thing. Maybe the flipside was better but I did myself a favor and turned it off midway through side one. - Ben W.

NAKED AGGRESSION - 7" EP

Broken Rekids, Box 460402, San Francisco CA 94146

This 5-song EP showcases a pretty good, young hardcore band, I'm guessing from Madison, WI. The music chugs along nicely but frankly, I'd feel better about the whole thing if you didn't have to listen to the singer.



At least two of the people in this photo are probably in HELL NO, although this is actually the last (we hope) Animal Crackers reunion show at ABC No Rio. Note to Ted Leo: You're no Marky Mark, dude. Keep your pants on next time.

Not that she's got a bad voice, it's just that simplistic, knee jerk lyrics concerning riveting social issues like censorship (do they expect to be applauded for taking a stand on this issue? what's next, religion?) generally cause me to hang my head and feel embarrassed for the singer. - Ben W.

NATIONS ON FIRE - "The Demo Days" EP

Stand As One, BP 77-75623, Paris Cedex 13, France
Boston-esque hardcore from Belgium. Two familiar scenesters from this band are ex-members of Rise Above. The vocals on this EP are melodic at times, but mostly stick to the screaming thrash monotone which I can only handle in small doses. One interesting bit is the spoken word thanks list at the end of side two; neat idea! "New Hope (For A Dead Scene)" is my favorite tune. Male/female vocals too. Yeah! - Mike L.

NOISE CULTURE - "Face The Future" 5-song EP PO Box 3162, Jamaica NY 11431

This is actually a German release on a label called (I think) Refrigerator Heaven, but the band's from NY and features sometime-Jersey Beat reviewer Alan Baez on lead. We actually reviewed these five songs as a demo tape a while ago, so let me just say they're hard-hitting funk and hard rock with political lyrics that's two or three times better than most of that Chili Peppers shit around these days. - Jim T.



RANCID HELL SPAWN/THE FELS - Split 7"

Toxic Shock, Box 43787 Dept O, Tucson AZ 85733

There's something strangely fun and cuddly about Rancid Hell Spawn's brand of unlistenable noise. There are actual pop ditties hidden under tracks and tracks of gunky, vacuum cleaner-like sound effects. Having a sense of humor also helps if you choose to traffic in wretched grunge and these guys have one. The Fells caught up two tunes that could easily be mistaken for Nuggets outtakes in a blind taste-test -- cool 60's inspired garage rock. - Des Jr.

SANITY ASSASSINS 7"

Dionysus, PO Box 1975, Burbank CA 91507

This is a 3 song EP with a cover drawing of a psychedelic pattern, leading to a large-breasted girl sitting on a mushroom. Naturally, two of the songs are of the nauseating hippie-psychedelic rock variety, but the surprising thing is that there's actually one good punk song on here called (of course) "Razorblades." I might even be worth stealing for that one tune but don't spend your money. - Ben W.

REASONS FOR DOING A FANZINE -

YOU GET TONS OF FREE RECORDS.

GEE, ANOTHER FREE POSER DISCO FAG SINGLE IN THE MAIL TODAY! WOW!

YOU MEET LOTS OF INTERESTING PEOPLE.

I'M INTO THE DEATH THING, YA KNOW. WHAT DO YOU LIKE BEST ABOUT SPECIMEN?

GOSH, HAS IT REALLY BEEN TWO HOURS ALREADY?

YOU RAKE IN THE BIG BUCKS.

\$400 FOR A 1,000-WORD COVER STORY ON THE POGUES? NO PROBLEM! I CAN WRITE IT TONIGHT AND HAVE IT IN THE MAIL FOR YOU BY TOMORROW!

THIS HAPPENS EVERY DAY

YOU GET TO LIE A LOT, AND PEOPLE BELIEVE YOU.

YEAH, I GET TONS OF FREE RECORDS, I MEET LOTS OF INTERESTING PEOPLE, AND I RAKE IN THE BIG BUCKS!

GOSH WOW GREAT

SCREECHING WEASEL - "Pervo Devo" EP

Shred Of Dignity, Box 17050, San Francisco CA 94117

The first time I heard this record, I was at the WFM studios and everyone in the room started smiling just seconds into the first song. If that isn't reason enough to buy this fine 7 inch, then I don't know what is. This latest installment of the Weasel collection is the best to date. Three songs in all, including "I Wanna Be A Homosexual" (previously released on the impossible to find "What Are You Pointing At" comp, but this is a new version recorded with the current Weasel lineup). "She's Giving Me The Creeps" excels in the lyrics department, and a throwaway Patsy Cline cover tops it all off. Included in this sharp package is the final issue of Ben Weasel's sex zine, "Teen Punks In Heat," which is, well, brilliant.

- Mike L.

SHAMPAIN - "Siempre Lo Mismo" EP

Computer Crime, 74 Osborne Ave, Norwalk CT 06855

Jeff Spaz continues his one-man campaign to bring Puerto Rican hardcore to the world with this 7-song EP. This one's produced a little better than his earlier efforts (which, frankly, sounded like shit). Musically it's just fast thrash with Spanish lyrics. But judging from the song titles ("La Radio Esta Muerta," "Siempre Lo Mismo") punks in Puerto Rico are just as pissed off with things as they are here. - Jim T.

SPINOUT - 4 song EP

Delicious, 6607 Sunset Blvd, Los Angeles CA 90028

Rockin' garage music here. The A side is studio (album?) tracks. The B side sounds like a drunken jam recorded in a shoebox, complete with cardboard drum, uncontrolled feedback and tape dropouts. Whether or not this is authentically booze-fueled or just studied slop is moot 'cause as far as I'm concerned, there's nothing wrong with this record. - Des Jr.

THUNDERING LIZARDS - 3 song EP

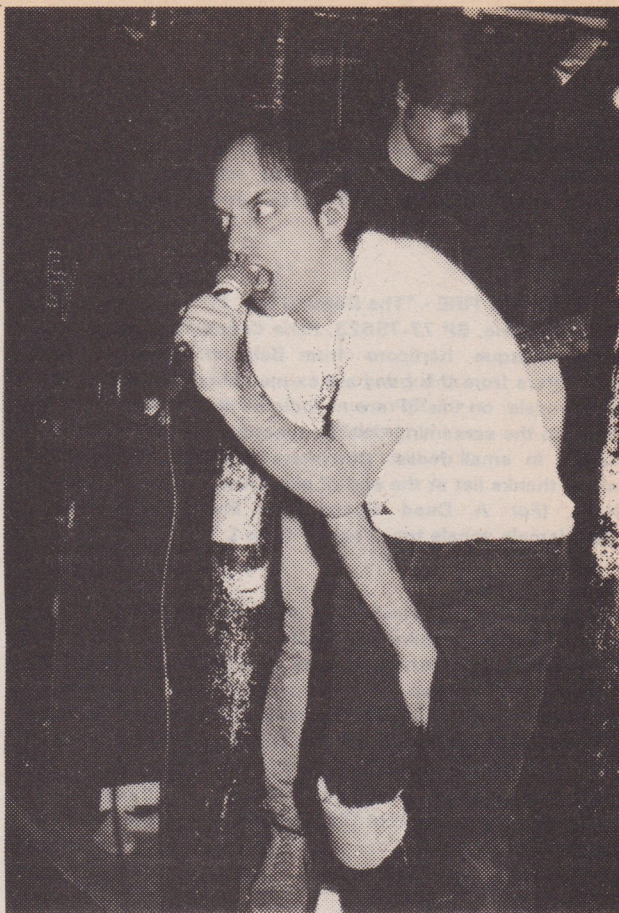
% LBS, 875 3rd Ave 9th fl, NYC 10022

The Thundering Lizards introduced themselves in a letter as a "psychedelic rock band," which I take to mean that they all smoke reefer at rehearsals. This is a very bad idea; besides whatever damage it does to your lungs and chromosomes, pot makes you stupid. Get high and you'll giggle at anything. That's the only possible explanation why anyone would bother releasing a one-joke novelty song like "Do You Wanna?(get some marijuana!)" and follow it up with an even less funny joke-song called "Kill The Neighbors." If the Evil Jim in this band is the same lame no-talent cretin I once saw do a spoken word, it makes a certain amount of sense, I suppose. This 7-person combo does confirm my prejudice that any band with more than six members almost always sucks. - Jim T.

THE TROUBLE WITH LARRY - "Songs Of Romance & Intrigue"

Good Kitty, 201A N Davis Ave, Richmond VA 23220

Songs of romance and intrigue? Couldn't find what was so intriguing about the tired format of horror movie/deep and deliberate anguished vocals. Mix in a bowl: Thomas Traux, Theater Of Ice, and some Swans and you get the idea. - Tom A.



This is MYKEL BOARD and ARTLESS at their big comeback show at ABC No Rio. They don't have a single out or anything to review but I promised Mykel I'd stick him in the zine somewhere. And besides, what would our 10th anniversary issue be without the oldest old fart in punk? Photo by Jim Testa

THOSE UNKNOWN - 7"

Headache, 53 Myrtle Ave, Midland Pk NJ 07432

Relatively new, Those Unknown have been attracting attention around NJ, and rightly so. This 4-piece can write some killer Oi-influenced punk. Like labelmated Niblick Henbane, the guitars have the crunch, the choruses are catchy, and the lyrics -- about starting a revolution, staying youthful, and how the four of them stick together -- have Oi! written all over them. 3 stars -- and on cool swirly yellow/black vinyl too! - Tom A.

THREE CAR GARAGE - 7"

Prospective, PO Box 6425, Minneapolis MN 55406

Some music was meant to go with summer, and buddy, Three Car Garage sure know how to crank out the sunny weather tunes. These two songs make me quiver with anticipation for a long drive on a hot August afternoon. Electric Love Muffin never had it this good, but I get the impression that's what they were going for. That's right, 3CG are into that rockin' sound with touches of wonderful 60's psychedelia. Superb. Lemme try again... SUPERB!!!

- Mike L.

VELOCITY GIRL - "My Forgotten Favorite" 7"

Slumberland, PO Box 8012, Silver Spring MD 20907

Velocity Girl is Washington, DC's answer to the Manchester dancepop invasion. Layers of guitars and sweet melodies make this VG's finest recording effort to date, as well as Slumberland's best single. "My Forgotten Favorite" could easily be a big alternative hit. - Mike H.

VINDICTIVES - The Invisible Man EP

PO Box 183, Franklin Pk, IL 60131

Old school punk rock with Jello-esque lead vocals and appropriately snotty harmonies. All four of these songs stuck in my head for days, a mean feat for some dinky single by a band I'd never heard of. "Circles" is the keeper, with great lyrics about falling in line, society wise. I hope I never grow tired of great singalong punk like this. Highly recommended. - Des Jr. (Oh yeah, the rhythm guitarist is some guy named Ben Weasel -- Editor)

VISIONSTAIN - "The Campsite" EP

Silverdish, Box 612, Brockport NY 14420

"Monster Pop" is a pretty neat tune but goes on for a bit too long. I'm not crazy about anything else on this record, but it's all right in a sloppy, punk kind of way. - Des Jr.

WOODENHORSE - "Title" 7"

House O'Pain, Box 120861, Nashville TN 37212

Woodenhorse is a Pensacola, FL band with members of Headless Marines. They play sort of an emo-core style similar to Samiam. This disc has two well-produced songs that both go on a little too long, but sound pretty good nonetheless. Lyrically, there's an obscure song about somebody's grandfather and a ran about the bogosity of judging people. - Ben W.

YUMMY - "Do Your Fix" 7"

Bag Of Hammers, Box 928, Seattle WA 98111

I know I should be tired of the "Seattle Sound" by now, but when it's done well, with all the required elements in their proper places, I still get a kick out of it. My only problem is that there isn't any originality to be found anywhere on these seven inches of plastic. Close your eyes, turn the volume to ten, and pretend it's an old Mudhoney 7 inch. Pick it up if you like this sort of thing, I guess. - Des Jr.

ZIPGUN - "Together Dumb" 7"

Empty, Box 12034, Seattle WA 98102

Good stuff. It sounds a lot like the Derelicts (only better) but that makes sense since that was the guitar player's old band. Don't worry that it's from Seattle, just buy. - Des Jr.

STUPID BY THE GRACE OF GOD - 7" comp

Assorted Porkchops, Box 4022, Wilmington NC 28406

TONKA starts off this disc with a great tune called "Butter Knife." The dual vocals work nicely and having seen them live, I can say that all their stuff is just as good -- short, fast bursts of melodic energy. BEDLAM HOUR turns in a tune called "Frankenberry Mosh" which was supposedly recorded before they turned into Flock Of Seagulls. Regardless, heavy mosh-type music with "funny" lyrics doesn't do much for me. Nice guys, but I know they have better tunes than this. TOAST turns in a good one in a happy, Descendents/Green Day vein but ruins the whole thing by allowing their singer to assault us with his whiney, wimp voice. UNHERD puts in an appearance as well with a good pop/punk number entitled "Walkin' Around." If this disc is any representation of the punk scene in the Carolinas, there's still hope for the South. - Ben W.

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98% WHOLESOME #1

Graham Trievel, Box 481 Rt 113, Lionville PA 19353

Cool little half-sized zine with tongue in cheek interviews with various scenesters (Edgewise, Sacramento's Steve Mar, Sockeye) and little bits of filler. No price given so send a couple stamps.

BEN IS DEAD March/April 92 \$3

PO Box 3166, Hollywood CA 90028

This is the "Glamour" issue with a funny cover lampooning those hi-fashion magazines (the babe on the cover is a black transvestite). This thing just keeps growing and getting better, sort of a fanzine's-eye perspective of the L.A. punk scene with all the trappings of a real magazine.

BOUNCING CASKET #5 \$2

104 Wilkinson, East Prairie MO 63845

Editor Mike just lost his job so send a couple of extra bucks for some back issues. A dedicated 1/2 size punkzine (with a fetish for NJ bands, for some reason), this issue has a good report on Ultraman's last show (I didn't even know they broke up until I read this), plus Gameface, Bitch Witch, Hobbledehoy, and lots of reviews.

CHAIRS MISSING "It's So Obvious" issue \$3.25

PO Box 522, Stratford CT 06497

The zine that names each issue after a Wire song sums up 1991 with its top ten lists, plus the usual sagacious interviews with Head Of David, My Dad Is Dead, and the Buzzcocks Steve Shelley. Plus lots of un-p.c. opinions guaranteed to make you pissed.

CONDERE CAPITA #1 \$1

PO Box 1232, Litchfield CT 06759

The name means "to join heads" in Latin which is what this is -- four pals from Conn. joining heads to do a zine. Mostly pasteup collages from newspapers with some hand-lettered stories and little rants and raves.

DISSONANCE #2 \$2

% Leif Hunneman, PO Box 4772, Highland Pk NJ 08904

Who says desktop publishing isn't punk? Everything from music reviews to cyberpunk, interviews with G.G. Allin and Double Penetration plus some weird pieces that go beyond the punkzine norms.

EAR OF CORN #23 \$2

PO Box 2143, Stow OH 44224

Even Dave from Ear Of Corn is complaining his zine has too many reviews, and he's so punk-rock, it's ridiculous. Actually EoC is a lot less ridiculous than it used to be; fairly straightforward reviews with Chicagoland moshers Impetigo and the Screamin' Popeyes too.

ENEMY'S VOICE #1

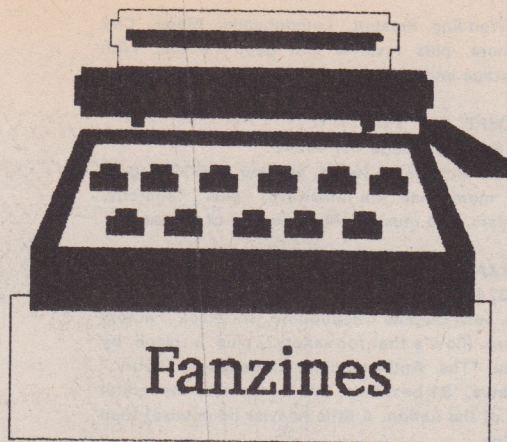
Jorg Koch, Zum Lohbusch 52 b, 5600 Wuppertal 1, GERMANY

I have no idea what this would cost to send overseas but it's rare to see a German zine done in English. There's quite a bit about the fascist threat facing the new post-USSR Europe. Lots of interesting reading. Interviews with Majority Of One, Nations On Fire, and Go! too. Try sending \$3 for postage and a nice chatty letter and I bet you get one.

FURTHER TOO... #2

40 Darwin Ct, Barlow St, London SE17 1HR England

Their tastes aren't strictly limited to punk but there's a definite punkzine spirit at work here in this zine, with clean, bright layouts. I enjoyed all the bits on pop but the stuff about football (soccer to us) were incomprehensible.



GENETIC DISORDER #6 2 stamps

PO Box 151362, San Diego CA 92175

Good little zine that focuses on its local scene and beyond. Intvws with Poster Children, SNFU, Coffin Break, a piece about Fugazi's impact on band bookings, and reviews.

HOUSE O' PAIN #7 \$2

PO Box 120861, Nashville TN 37212

Busy punkzine with glossy cover and chuck full o' music. Intvws with Firehose, Rollins, Fixtures, Trusty, and U.K. Subs, plus gobs of reviews.

THE JELLY SLIDE two stamps

PO Box 731, Neshanic Sta NJ 08853

Starts off with an essay contest to win a free CD ("compare and contrast the Monkees and Spinal Tap" is one of the questions) and goes on from there. Light-hearted romp thru punkland with reviews, games, and assorted scribbings.

LIZARD'S EYELID Winter 92 \$2

PO Box 8561, Jupiter FL 33468

There's an interview here with Charles Bukowski that's the highlight of the zine, along with busy art layouts and some punk reviews and band interviews. Also lots of contact addresses for Florida bands and clubs. Write to this guy if you're touring through Florida!

LUVBOAT EARTH #18

% Joshua Glenn, 9 Asticou Rd, Boston MA 02130

This issue is dedicated to the film "Slackers" and there's a definite slacker attitude in the way it meanders along from topic to topic without much purpose or ambition. Poems, stories, thoughts and some pasteup art.

MURTAUGH #6 3 stamps

% Spike Vrusho, 137 Emerson Pl, Bklyn NY 11205

Any fanzine named after a baseball player (the immortal Danny Murtaugh of the Pittsburgh Pirates, of course!) is okay by me. And any zine that interviews Lee Mazzilli and Jim Foetus...well, you get the idea. Reviews, poems, other stuff too, xeroxed. The editor, a native Ohioan, also reports that Ron House of the great Ohio band Great Plains now writes a baseball column for a Columbus weekly. Heck, I remember when he used to play softball with me and Ira Kaplan and the gang in Hoboken.

NERVOUS BY NATURE #2

224 Derby Rd, Lentox, Nottingham England

Really nice looking British fanzine with engaging

Interviews: Wedding Present, Lemonheads, Mega City Four, and more, plus reviews and good photos. With overseas postage and all, I'd send at least \$3 to get one.

NOISY CONCEPT #14 \$1

621 Bassett Rd, Bay Village OH 44140

An interview with Satan (what, another one?? He gets interviewed more than Ian MacKaye) plus "anarchy, hemp, veganism, and music." Plus a sense of humor.

RADICAL PIZZA #5 \$2

PO Box 158324, Nashville TN 37215

Interviews with Eugene Chadbourne, Jet Black Factory and Sepultura (how's that for variety?) plus a piece by Bob Black on "The Anti-Anarchist Conspiracy Theory." Lots of reviews, '91 best-lists, and a report by the editor on the state of the nation. A little heavier (idea-wise) than your usual zine.

PUDCHAIN #2 \$1

1107 Severnview Dr, Crownsville MD 21032

Big pictures and large type make this easy to read (although the copying is often poor). Reviews, interviews, poems, fiction and so forth with a sort of slapdash layout technique that lavishes a lot of space on stuff.

SCENIC #2 \$1.75

520 W Fourteen Mile #118, Troy MI 48083

Another zine with that unmistakable Macintosh computer look, equal doses fiction/poetry and punk rock, with lots of ads and clean layouts.

SHOELACE #2 \$1.50

PO Box 7952, Trenton NJ 08628

The combined talents of South Jersey's two pre-eminent zinesters (Erik Szantai and Bob Conrad) put forth Shoelace (whenever school and work allow). Interviews with Loose and Shudder To Think, plus lots of reviews and photos.

SPILLED GUTS #8 50cents

% Chris Wagner, 12 White Oak Way, Trenton NJ 08628

A thin issue with lots of reviews, a couple of photos, and the editor's report on the Lollapalooza Festival.

STIFFNECK ZINE #2 \$1

Jeff, 400 Adeline Dr, Keswick Ontario Canada L4P 3C3

Interviews and reviews with an emphasis on heavy heavy-metal. The copying and artwork could be a little better.

TWISTWORTHY #5 \$1

4030 Cypressdale Dr, Spring TX 77388

One of my favorites, there's always lots of cool photos and reviews. This issue has Jawbox, Trusty, and the Accused interviews.

THE VILLAGE NOIZE #12 \$3

48-54 213 St, Bayside NY 11364

Coverboys Soundgarden are the featured interview, along with Black Francis of the Pixies, CoC, and James, lots of reviews, excellent photos, and a free Iron Works flexi.

ABNORMAL

THE LEAVING TRAINS



THE LUMP IN MY FOREHEAD

THE LEAVING TRAINS don't care if you listen to their new album, **THE LUMP IN MY FOREHEAD**, because they're definitely not "PC." We call them "PC" (Politically Fucked-up). LUMP is the fifth SST release from the TRAINS where a new, rejuvenated line up joins Falling James in launching personal affronts at Bob Hope, Burger King and women ("who make you feel like a piece of shit"). Falling even points a finger at himself on "Abnormal." Such an honest portrayal could have a serious impact on his bid for the White House this election year.

Yes, Falling James has tossed his shower cap in the ring for the 1992 presidential race. Part of his platform is to change the national anthem and return land to Native Americans that was misappropriated through bogus contracts. Surely, James will inform the thousands of folks he'll encounter at his candidacy along the upcoming, international "LUMPY" tour route. SST 288 (LP/CA/CD)

ALSO AVAILABLE:
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 TRANSPORTATIONAL D. VICES (LP/CA/CD) SST 221;
 FLUX (LP/CA/CD) SST 114;
 HILL TIMES (LP/CA/CD) SST 071

PELL MELL



FLOW

The new and much awaited album, **FLOW**, forwards the confusion that emerges every time one hears the music of PELL MELL. Here is a record that could be released ten years from now or 30 years ago and you still couldn't slot it into any category. PELL MELL's twin guitars and rhythm section concoct angular lines and hooks while keys and samples confound and complement the mix simultaneously. SST 278 (LP/CA/CD)

ALSO AVAILABLE:
 THE BUMPER CROP SST 158 (LP/CA/CD)
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CRUEL FREDERICK



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WE ARE THE MUSIC WE PLAY, the second CRUEL FREDERICK LP, elevates the boiling hot blowing of reedman/ringleader Lynn Johnston another hundred degrees higher from the free and cruel jazz first heard on their 1988 debut, **BIRTH OF THE CRUEL**. Alabama born and California (jazz) bred under his "personal mentor," Bobby Bradford at Pomona College, Johnston played with fellow reed student, David Murray (World Saxophone Quartet) at Pomona. In the underground LA jazz movement of the last decade, Johnston has shaped a very bent and revered sound amongst his peers. Johnston's aggravated horn assault, shaded with humorous tones points to his appetite for Albert Ayler, Eric Dolphy and Thelonious Monk. On **WE ARE THE MUSIC WE PLAY**, CRUEL FREDERICK covers three Monk tunes and "Dee Dee," a number by another artist noted for throwing curves, Ornette Coleman. **WE ARE THE MUSIC WE PLAY** is jazz at its cruelest. SST 290 (LP/CA/CD)

ALSO AVAILABLE:
 THE BIRTH OF THE CRUEL SST 127 (LP/CA/CD)

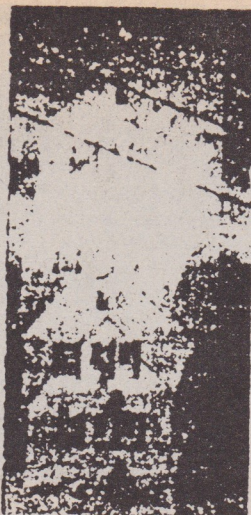
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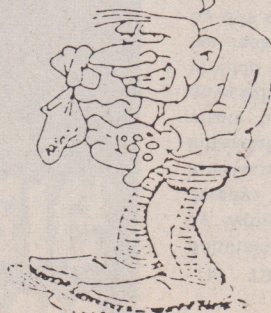
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Once A Misfit..

In 1986, shortly after the release of the first Samhain album, we tried to interview Glenn Danzig by writing to him c/o Plan 9 Records in Lodi, New Jersey. He actually wrote back and agreed to do the interview, ending his note with "if you are not too intimidated, I will expect to hear from you soon." I wrote back and said "Glenn, if I was intimidated by guys who painted skulls on the back of their jackets, I wouldn't be doing a fanzine." Mr. Danzig, famous for his lack of a sense of humor, apparently was miffed by this remark and cancelled the interview.

In 1992, shortly before the release of the third Danzig album, we again tried to interview Glenn Danzig. This time, we had to contact the publicity department of his label, Def American Records. I found the name of the person who handled Danzig's press (in Los Angeles, mind you) and called three times, leaving messages each time without any response. So I got the fax number and faxed a letter, explaining what I wanted, noting that we had interviewed other ex-Misfits in Kryst The Conqueror and the Undead in recent issues and offering Glenn a chance to rebut some of their statements about him. This time, we didn't even receive the courtesy of a reply.

Fuck major labels. Fuck Glenn Danzig. And if you're stupid enough to pay \$75 for a Misfits 7-inch that was a joke when it came out in 1982, fuck you too.

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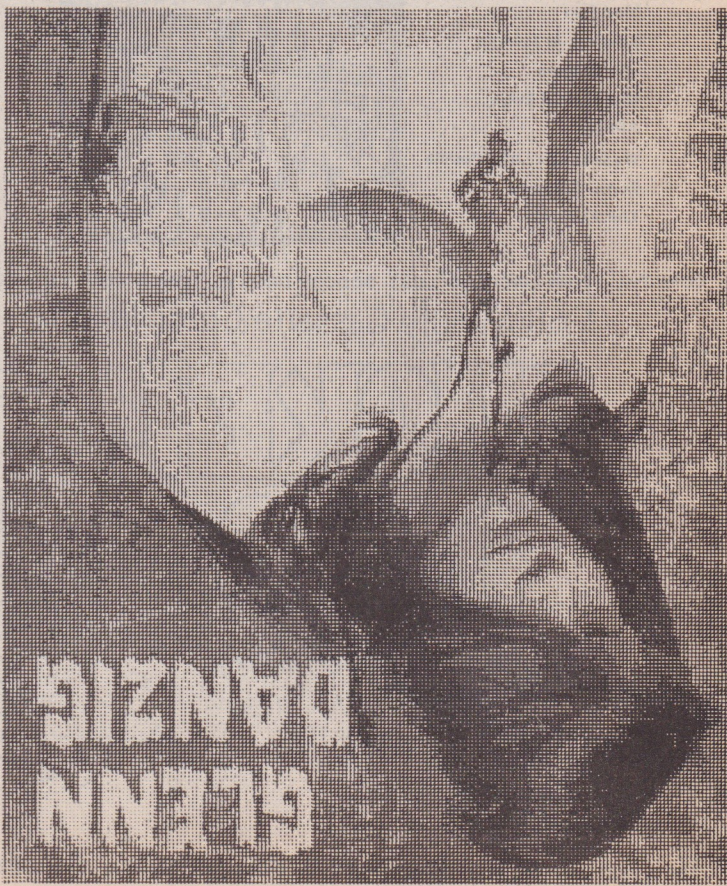
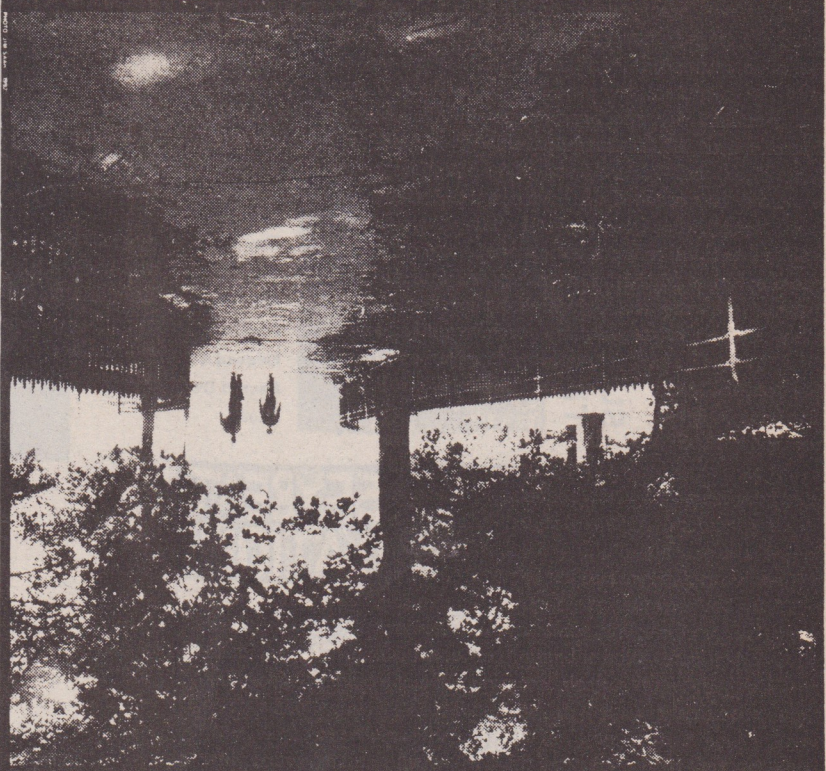
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CIRCUS LUPUS



TOUR DIARY

TRUSTY

SEPT 20th Things take a turn for the better, possibly due to the fine dining and soul-searching lunch at the St Louis Krishna Temple. The Krishnas were excited to find out we knew Shelter and that we were to be playing with them soon thereafter, but we broke their hearts when they found out we weren't a straight edge band. Played a really good, enjoyable, smooth-running show in Springfield, MO, rather uneventful except for James threatening to eat a girl's baby.

SEPT 21st Lawrence, KS - After all our excitement and sleepless nights worrying over the safety and well-being of our equipment and selves, and my own disbelief that I was allowing myself to play on the same bill as G.G. Allin, the man has the audacity to cancel. I lived here a good number of years in my childhood - it's amazing the changes that take place in a town over ten years, but I could still show the guys where I went to elementary school. Anyway, we were scheduled to play at the Outhouse, but due to circumstances unknown, the show was moved to a big college party

SEPT 22nd Louisville, KY - The last time I was in Louisville, I had a blast, but this matinee show was a complete bomb. Poor advertising and an argument with the owner of the Club With No Name over getting paid made for a real disappointing setback in morale and finances. Fortunately, Erie's lost and a nearby Taco Bell were present to aid us in drowning our sorrows.

SEPT 23-26 Chicago - Spent four days at some friends' apartment, visiting my relatives and record shopping, going to museums, spending money, getting mugged (Bircha discovers things aren't the same in Chicago as they are in Little Rock), and growing very antsy. All this, and we never played a show here.

complete with 30 kegs. The house was packed with drunk college dudes and babes -- too packed to move ourselves through, let alone our equipment. We said fuck this and drove all night to Louisville, much to the dismay of Bircha's hormones.

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TRUSTY

touring, we could work the door. Lucky for us, we left with our pockets full and in high spirits. Topped off the night with a hot tub.

SEPT 16th Austin, Texas -

Unfortunately, we only went to Austin to stay with a friend. We should have played here, it's a great college town with a good music scene.

SEPT 17th Lubbock, Texas - I hate this

town. Everytime I've been here, I've had a lousy time. Richard and I walked around the campus and noticed that everyone was walking by themselves and no one returned our smiles - an example of how dismal this shit-hole is. We played with the Agitators at a pizza joint to a handful of people - pretty boring. It rained really hard and we got hit with a bad cold spell - and to top it all off, the drunk pizza joint owner wanted free shirts for all his employees. Yeah, right.

SEPT 18th - I thought Lubbock was bad. Welcome to Tulsa, Oklahoma - the most depressing place in the midwest. This place ranks up there with Detroit. Things go from bad to worse when we see the basement we're supposed to play is submerged in a foot of water. Due to my alleged sickness and fear of electrocution, we opt not to play and move on. Amazingly enough, we are given gas money, which we wisely spend on a hotel room and some good reading material.

SEPT 19th St Louis, MO - There's something about waking up in the loft of a van, just inches from the ceiling, wondering where the hell you are. Things hit rock bottom. We play a tight set with great sound to a whooping eight people. Fortunately, our frisbee and net football provided some pre-show fun. Spent the night shivering in a friend's dorm room on the cold, hard, cement floor, with only a paper-thin blanket, contemplating the word "regret."

own Dead Horse), the crowd consisted of a lot of crazed, sweaty longhairs. Fortunately, we were able to confuse them into thinking we were a thrash band by playing our faster numbers, and in the end, won their hearts as well as their wallets. Tip o' the hat to Sean Bailey and Clint from The Agitators. Off to a good start.

SEPT 14th Houston, Texas - The Pit 'N Pak is a strange place - once a garage band and now a bar, drawing an oddly diverse crowd, ranging from punk rockers to friendly drunk Mexicans dancing around the jukebox. Local bands usually play for free here, but because we were



Jersey Beat's Mike Harbin, probably best known as bassist for the late, lamented Admiral, spent last summer touring the country as the fill-in bass player for Trusty. We asked him to jot down some of what he remembered from the long and winding road the band followed for close to three months, and here's what he came up with.

by Mike Harbin

SEPT 13th Dallas, Texas - We pulled into the lot of a film shooting of a new Return Of The Living Dead. Due to the predominantly metal bill (including Texas'

FIREHOSE

[As far as the Minutemen,] real intense fans go back, it's a product of the MTV thing. They don't have to go out and look for music, they just turn on the tv and there it is, handed to them. So all they know is the heavy metal and the bad pop. It's too easy. When I was growing up, I grew up in a real small town. No college radio. There was a cool punk station in a nearby town. But until I turned 18 and went off to Ohio State, that was the only exposure I had to anything outside of Casey Kasem Top 40. Once I got to college, for three years I did very little but go back and find new stuff that I'd missed. I was always discovering some cool band that one of my friends would trade to me. I had to go through a total learning period. This was 1982, 1983, I'm talking about. Kids today don't bother.

Q: On the other hand, there are a lot of fanzines today that you didn't have as a kid which help get the word out.

Ed: Definitely. The thing about all these fanzines and Maximum Rock N Roll and even Flipside is getting real big now, at least it makes things more accessible. It doesn't seem like the great mystery it used to be. You just start a company and do mailorder. Gee, that's easy. You take orders and you mail stuff out. I think that's probably where vinyl is going to wind up, and I don't think it's such a bad idea. It's not a bad way to go, really. I think audiophiles, real high-end classical buffs, I think they're going to demand vinyl. I think they're going to go back to analog recording. I've been reading a lot of real pro-vinyl stuff lately. But it will become specialized.

Q: Even though you've been around a long time, I have a lot of trouble thinking of Firehose as part of any particular scene, like the SoCal bands or L.A. bands...

Ed: Nobody really around L.A. fits in with us. There are certain bands we like to play with, if we can hook up with them. This current tour, we're going to play some dates with Run Westy Run. They're one of my faves. Supersuck, we love playing with them. They have to be my favorite band right now.

But around us, in L.A., as far as bands go, it's been kind of thin lately. There's a few good things here and there. We're really not a part of any of the scenes around here. It's 40 miles for us to play Hollywood, so it's not close. We're definitely not part of that scene. Hollywood bands are very identifiable. Redd Kross, they're Hollywood. We're not a Hollywood band.

Firehose will be touring through May and should have another album out in September.

Ed: I would say, definitely, some of our audience still comes from the hardcore scene. At the all-ages show, sure, most of 'em. Those are great because you can't imagine how many young kids come to the shows. We really love that because it's so hard getting all-ages shows out by us in San Diego. It's so much better for the shows, because otherwise you ask yourself, who am I playing for exactly? College professors are there, whoever, how am I supposed to relate to these characters? I get real excited when the kids show up. Especially the skateboarders, they seem to take us to heart for some reason.

Q: The Minutemen were sort of an early hardcore band, but you probably have a lot of fans now who never heard of the Minutemen. Do you still draw a lot of young fans?

Ed: I would say, definitely, some of our audience still comes from the hardcore scene. At the all-ages show, sure, most of 'em. Those are great because you can't imagine how many young kids come to the shows. We really love that because it's so hard getting all-ages shows out by us in San Diego. It's so much better for the shows, because otherwise you ask yourself, who am I playing for exactly? College professors are there, whoever, how am I supposed to relate to these characters? I get real excited when the kids show up. Especially the skateboarders, they seem to take us to heart for some reason.

Ed: We do it the same way, one van and four people, the sound guy and us. We sell t-shirts, that's the extent of our merchandising. Mike sells them from the stage after the show. It's really quite comical. But hey, it works. There's nobody to pay.

Q: How about touring? You guys live on the road. Any difference between touring as an SST band and as a Columbia Records band?

Mike Watt



by Jim Testa

There's an old saw that goes if you do something long enough, eventually you get good at it. That doesn't really apply to a band like Firehose, though. Bassist Mike Watt and drummer George Hurley were already old pros from their years in the Minutemen when a tragic van crash ended the life of Minuteman D. Boon, and Watt and Hurley formed Firehose with new teammate Ed Crawford. Given the band's horrific beginnings, it's amazing that Firehose has not only survived the 80's but emerged as one of the few punk bands that's got a real handle on the music industry of the '90's. Their deal with Sony Music might not have produced Nirvana-like sales figures, but the band's first Sony lp, *Flying The Flannel*, has sold respectably, and the band recently released an EP called "Totem Pole" of their favorite covers and a few old tunes, recorded live on tour. And because they went into the deal with their eyes open (and a relatively small investment by the label), they're one of the few major label alternative bands who actually get royalty checks in the mail, instead of bank statements showing how much they still owe against their advance.

Someone once compared the dynamics of working in a trio to an isosceles triangle -- you've got three equal sides each supporting the other, and the damn thing is as solid as anything you'll find in geometry (or rock and roll). Firehose works that way not only in their performances but outside the band as well; Mike Watt is the businessman of the group, Ed Crawford is the spokesman, and George Hurley provides the sex appeal.

FIREHOSE

With the exception of Fugazi, it's hard to think of another band that's earning a living and surviving on their music without compromising the ideals they developed coming up through the punk rock scene as well as Firehose. That's one of the things we discussed with Ed Crawford, as well as a whole lot more...

Q: You do some great covers on the "Totem Pole" EP, but probably the most surprising is Public Enemy's "Sophisticated Lady." You've been doing that for a while, haven't you?

Ed: We've been doing it since, oh, 1989 or so. We heard the original demo, Thurston [Moore of Sonic Youth] had given us a copy that he had gotten from the original, pre-Def Jam Public Enemy. Real raw stuff. In its early, original form, it went on a lot longer, just verse after verse after verse. So we chopped it pretty heavily and adapted it. We definitely took some liberties with it.



and fanzines, and why we allow everything to be pigeonholed with handy labels and why so few music people seem to have any imagination or frigid sense of humor anymore! For Christ's sake, let's have a panel on the important stuff before it's too late.

Meanwhile, happy anniversary, Jim. In 1982, I interviewed Lester Bangs two weeks before he died. In 1992, everybody misses him and lots of people copy him, but only a few write with his spirit and energy, and those are the ones worth reading.

Nostalgia sucks.

- Jim DeRogatis

For posterity, how about your definition of good rock 'n roll?

Lester: I don't know.... I guess it's just something that makes you feel alive. It's something human, you know, and I think that anything that I would want to listen to would be made by human beings instead of computers or machines. And to me, good rock 'n roll also includes other things, like Hank Williams or Charles Mingus, or a lot of other things that aren't generally defined as rock 'n roll. I mean, rock 'n roll is like an attitude, it's not a musical form. It's a way of doing things. Anything can be rock 'n roll, you know it when you see it. Writing can be rock 'n roll, a movie can be rock 'n roll, it doesn't necessarily have to have anything to do with music. I guess it's a way of living your life.

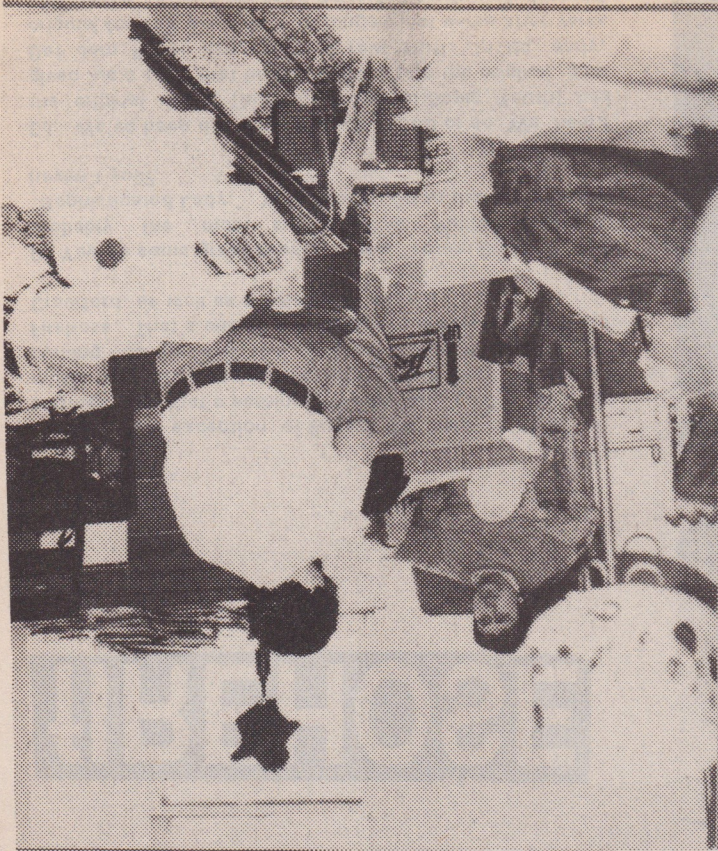
I don't think rock 'n roll is as important a force as it was in the 60's. Rock 'n roll is getting to be like jazz used to be: Big in Europe. Those kids out there, they're concerned about getting jobs and stuff. They'll go to see Styx and it's like a spectacle, very much leisure time activity, something you consume.... Even right now, rock 'n roll doesn't exist. On the one side, you have this utterly homogenized margarine, and on the other, you have a group of people celebrating total incompetence. The idea of new wave was originally do-it-yourself and since there are no rules, you can come up with really good and inventive and interesting stuff. It's not just saying "I can't play...." These days, it feels like there is so little that is rock 'n roll that has any vitality to it. I think that everybody is just staying in their house listening to old records, everyone is digging in for the long haul.

My responsibility as I see it as a critic is to help people who are buying the records to keep from hating my guts because they made a purchase that was really a piece of shit. For most writers, it's easier to help the bands 'coz you get a lot more work that way and every magazine loves to print reviews that say "This is wonderful," "This is great," "Go out and buy this," and a lot of magazines don't even print negative reviews. It becomes a facet of your groovy modern lifestyle. Well, fuck that shit. I don't want to be used just to sell product. I ain't a shill! If that means you have to say everything sucks, well, I don't know. I don't know where I can go having as bad an attitude as I do, but it's the only attitude I think you can have.

On Video:

It's shit.... there's Elvis Costello and there's Echo And The Bunnymen and there's Pat Benatar, and there's Styx and REO type stuff and it all sucked. It all sucked dogs equally. You know, NO GOOD. Also I think there's something about videotape intrinsically cold. It lends itself to soap operas and Mary Hartman type stuff. It's sort of anti-rock 'n roll right there.

The Place: Lester Bangs' apartment, New York City



I think it's a question of the right people. Van Morrison is going to be making albums in his 50's that are great, and this new Lou Reed album (The Blue Mask) is great and he's 40. I mean, a lot of the people who have done the greatest things in rock 'n roll have not done them in their teens or 20's. I never thought that being a teenager is the, no offense, absolutely coolest thing you can be. I was pretty unhappy when I was a teenager and I wouldn't want to go back to it. All these people who say "Teenage rock 'n roll" as if that's the only thing it's about, celebrating your adolescence.... There's other things. You bring rock 'n roll into life. I think rock 'n roll is better when it reaches into those things. One reason I like the Velvet Underground is because it's real adult music.

On getting old:

It's all dismal. There's only a few writers that are any good, and I won't say who they are.... I mean, it's like people that were going to journalism school or whatever and they realized that being a rock critic was an easy way to get a foothold in a journalistic career. So they're opportunists. You can tell by their writing, they don't have the passion for the music that somebody who gets into it because they really like music has. I've seen their record collections: a few Bonnie Raitt albums and that's it. The next thing you know, they go out and buy a Public Image Ltd record 'coz that's the thing they're supposed to do. I hate that kind of shit. That's what I hate anywhere, people that are just being trendies or opportunists.

On Criticism:

Remembering Lester/Bangs

Nostalgia sucks. I don't mean to deprive Jim Testa of a well-deserved moment of patting himself on the back for 10 primo years of Jersey Beat, but I'm sick of living in the past, yearning for yesterday's sounds, yesterday's fashions, yesterday's politics, and yeah, yesterday's rock writing. It's easy to see why everyone's looking back in 1992: It's fucking hard to come up with something original to move things forward. But I've got more respect for the people who try and fail than for those who sit around remembering allegedly rosier days, and that's really what Jersey Beat's about. Look at the back issues and I guarantee you'll be amazed at how many bands you read about here first.

I was reluctant when Jim asked me to contribute to the "Where Were You In '82?" section (I was working hard to get out of high school, only to discover that college sucked too --- and I don't miss those days). Then he sent me a tape of the Lester Bangs panel at South By Southwest - a nostalgia fest where everybody lovingly remembered Lester without addressing the reasons why his legacy endures or what it means today -- and said he wanted to reprint parts of the interview. I'd done with Lester in April '82 (Andy Schwartz read long sections of it at the SXSW panel, without ever mentioning that he'd originally declined to print it in New York Rocker!). To me, the most interesting parts of this now-infamous interview are where Lester looked forward to his own future and the future of rock 'n roll, and it's remarkable how relevant many of those comments are today. There's another Lester Bangs tribute planned for May 15 at St. Mark's Church, this one put together by Lester's New York chums to mark the 10th anniversary of his death. I'm sure it will have more merit than the SXSW panel, but it's still superfluous. Lester's writing stands on its own, as do his words here (not to mention his often-overlooked album and single).

I love Lester Bangs, but he's dead and this is 1992 and I'm a hell of a lot more interested in talking about how relevant rock 'n roll is today and what, if anything, is left to be done with two guitars, bass, and drums; and why it seems to me that the best bands of my generation have absolutely nothing to say lyrically and how the rock critic fits in with the music industry, if he does at all, and why it's insidious that we don't address such issues as whether getting free records compromises our opinion, and if not, why so few of us bite the hand that feeds us by telling the plain and simple truth about the ugly shit, and how this wave of annoyingly politically-correct hyper-feminist rock writing assumes music began last year with Hole and why so many bad, boring, biased, unknowledgeable rock writers are tolerated in magazines



Lester is the one on the right without the mustache.
The Place: Lester Bangs' apartment, New York City
The Time: 1982, two weeks before Lester's untimely death

me "kind of thing. [Straightedge] wasn't just a declaration of sobriety that was supposed to make you a better person. That would've been okay with me... Straightedge is just that. It's straight, it's got no detours. It's got no time to stop and look at what other people are doing and how other people get along in life. And it was so violent! You know that old saying, when you strike a woman, you strike a rock? Nowadays when you strike a rock, you're hitting someone's head against the sidewalk at one of these shows. It's like kids terrorizing on each other, saying it's survival of the fittest in the mosh pit. Whatever happened to that beautiful wave of modulates, bodies, swaying to music?

When we started, we were such an unthreatening band, me up there with my dress on or whatever, being silly on stage. And I'd look out at the audience and it'd be 80% women. And the guys were like, they're soft but they can put down a pretty good thrash beat. And then one day I looked out there and it was like, ugh, testosterone. It was all boys. What happened to all the women who came to shows? One of the big differences to me between punk and hardcore in the early days was that women were going to have a serious role. They weren't going to just wind up dressing. Girlfriends were women you had to earn respect from. Isn't it kind of funny that the female companions of those [straightedge] boys are these Barbie doll women? They're like these suburban Molly Ringwald women, complete with little pouty, pissed off expressions.

But I'm not here to rant about this stuff. All this hate and in-KIDS! And I'm one of the biggest kids out there.

I like to call those [straight edge] kids "milk & cookie skin heads." That was their style, they liked to wolfpack looking tough, but inside, they were just... They're gonna be Teamsters. They're gonna be blue collar guys that you can sit and have a Bud with.



Photo by Sam Lahoz

It's possible to be in a band and make it a part of your life. It's not a make-or-break situation where you either have to become a star or you go back to being an accountant. Or a suicide case, or whatever.

On the current lineup, and the state of the band today:

Steven Taylor is a guitar teacher and boy, I didn't know what it's like to have a teacher in the band. Some people are licensed teachers and some people just know how to teach... Every day I'm around that man, I learn something, even if it's just not to speak until you know something...

Deborah could probably be making a six-figure salary by now. Instead, she's worrying about how to pay her rent. She's been in the band six years-plus. Deborah keeps this band together. She's diligent on the phone with all her heart and soul and belief that we are worth it. Everytime you call her up, she's there.

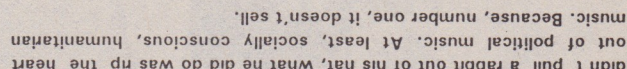
Nicky and I go way, way back, back to his days in the Stimulators and Even Worse, two fine old bands from yesteryear.

Billy Atwell is our newest and hopefully permanent drummer. He gave up a lot to come here, he was in Th'Inbred and the Rhythm Pigs down in Texas. He's an incredible drummer. A lot of big names were after him to be their drummer. He believes in what we're doing to the point where he's become a really active member. He's a composer, he plays all instruments, he writes full songs and sometimes presents them to the band that way. He's also a man who loves a good time, and his Southern fried wit sort of just shuts yer yap and stop whinin', boy, and just go for it. He's the greatest kick in the ass I've ever gotten from someone coming into the band.

Right now, we're the strongest ever. And when people ask us, How long has the band been around?, quoting Nicky Martin, we just say "This band's been around about a year." That's the truth. It's kind of like it's a new band, yet it's the same. We truly believe that we are the runner who has been passed the baton from Allen Ginsburg and Tuli Kupferberg and the Fugs and that kind of radical, word mastery mentality. More than that, like jazz musicians, this is our life, and no amount of criticism or adulation is going to stop it.

Sure I'd like to have a whole pile of success...but that probably won't happen anytime soon. Or maybe it will never happen. We'll just be one of those bands they'll retrospect. But the point is that we don't dwell on the past. We're so much part of the future and the present, and all the recent press we've gotten says that, says that we're more current than any of the other current bands around today. I'd like to think we're constantly evolving, that we don't just stop at politics... We are living experience. If you want to get anything out of this band, we offer the proof that you can survive. You can be your own person, always have your artistic destiny well within your hands, never have to transmute yourself into something you're not, and still put a smile on peoples' faces.

We've decided to come up with our own pigeonhole that you can put us in. We call ourselves "Poetic Terrorism."



the evening, finally climbs on stage at ten to four in the morning, with my cousin, to see Johnny hinders. So the guy OD's early in plays like four chords and falls down. And the club is like, sorry, no refunds, Johnny showed up. God rest his soul. He's probably off somewhere, being bad. How do you cop on a cloud?

Johnny Thunders? Well, I loved the guy, but being around him... needed a guitar amp to play that night. Well, we rented it to him. Johnny had a habit of trying to find "11" on every amp he used, and he was famous for blowing them up or just not giving them back, so we made damn sure. That didn't mean we weren't fans, we just had to be cautious.

When I was 17 years, I spent 6 dollars at Max's Kansas City, went

We played Great Gildersleeves, I think we played with MDC and DOA, and I know we played with an early version of Suicidal Tendencies. We once played with Black Flag at A.I. Of course we did a lot of shows with the Dead Kennedys, including the biggest show we've ever played -- the Bacon Theater, 1983. MDC, Dead Kennedys, False Prophets were third-billed, Bad Posture was fourth, and a now-defunct band called No Thanks. That was 3200 people in a place with about a 3700 capacity, no fights, no problems. I think it was nine dollars for five bands at a big venue.

We had some really great shows at the old Peppermint Lounge (on West 45th Street) because, oddly enough, the guy who "discovered" Metallica started to be our manager. So for like two months, we had these incredible shows, opening for these really big bands.

A lot of that straightedge thing was just a rebellion against parents with their martinis and closet alcoholism problems too. Some of the biggest and nastiest skinheads in New York had hippie parents... or at least, squatter/hippie/beatnik parents. It's backwards rebellion. One wonders since all those kids were sons and daughters of of insurance agents if they didn't do all that just because they had really good accident policies at home. Sure, I can stagedive and break my arm because I'm covered!

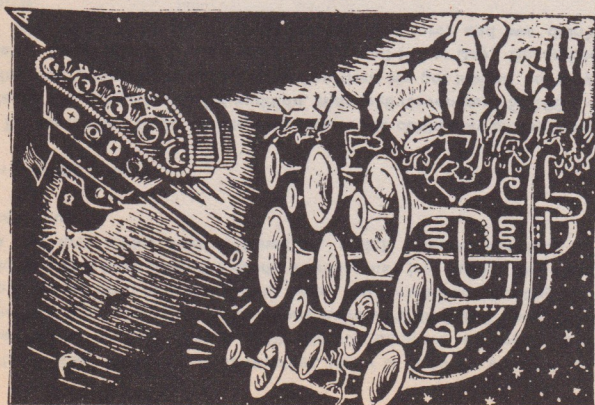
May I make a confession? I just stopped going to shows in those days. I saw a couple of those and I saw such...

See, I'm a kid from Brooklyn. I've never made myself out to be any more or any less. When I was a kid and I found a subway token on my dad's dresser, I figured out where the subway was and I came into Manhattan, and I discovered Washington Square Park. And yes, I tried to be things I wasn't, but I still think some of those things I wrote are better than the person who's writing them... That's why the band's called False Prophets. Question, question everything! I saw [the punk rock] era as a time when people were striving to be a person that was timeless and wise and cared about the future of this planet. Even just the future of a scene. And I saw that stop happening. I saw a holier-than-thou attitude, a "you follow me 'cos you're all sheep" and "you need to be branded with X's to follow

It's beyond straightedge. For everything you deny yourself, you're gonna make it up later in life. It's like the priest who detocks himself and becomes a sex maniac. Those straightedge kids are gonna grow up and sit next to each other in bars and drink beer and tell jokes about the "niggers who moved in next door" and ruined the

at the South Bronx, isolationist, protectionist, middle-class values. That kind of mentality was appealed to and marketed. And any band that came along and had that kind of provincial appeal -- from the boroughs, from the outlying states... And the equipment! All of a sudden, the kind of equipment that got on stage! No more with the shitty little Fender twin where you had to replace a tube in the thing every week. We're talking about Harkley systems and Trace Elliotts and Marshall stacks all over the place. Everything a metal band had except there was no hair. I like to call those kids "milk and cookie skinheads." That was their style, they liked to wolfpack looking tough, but inside, they were just... They're gonna be Teamsters. They're gonna be blue collar guys that you can sit and

because there are so many guys like Bruce Springsteen out there, the reason why Bruce Springsteen sells so many records is gonna keep driving until we do a Thelma & Louise right off a cliff. And that's what all these Chris Williamson bands were selling. I'm not even going to say that he only promoted right-wing bands. That would be foolish. But what he did promote was traditional, middle-class values. The kind of values you find in families where everyone sits around and argues and says stuff like, "That was a pretty racist statement." "But it's true!" That kind of Archie Bunker thing where people say, those people like to live in poverty and squalor, just look



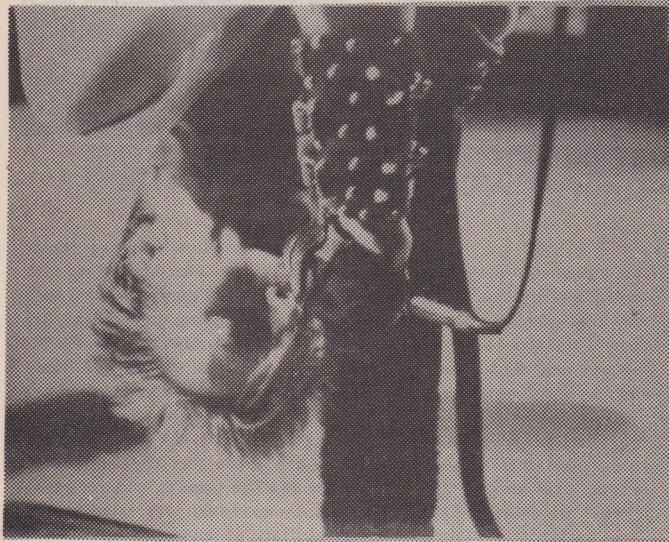
When hardcore came, it was a like a locust plague that the Bad

Brains might have helped bring up. They came up from D.C. by way of North Carolina. When they first came up here, they had short, tight aros and they were four black dudes playing this typical white dude music. They were a jazz fusion band. And they said, Can you dig it? And we all said, yes, we can. Then all the other bands that played fast at that time started welcoming the title "hardcore," because it meant you could play these shows that got a lot of attention. We were like, you know at family reunions when you have that sort of odd cousin that you don't know how to entertain because he's a little too smart? And yet you never know when he's gonna try to bite the cat's head off and experiment on it? Somebody you don't know how to handle. We were that, like the way Pat Smith was the weird cousin to punk rock, we ordained ourselves the weird cousin of hardcore.

There were critics back then, like Tim Sommers, who thought we were the Genesis of hardcore. And some people called us "Art Core." We were like the Residents back then.

All the bands back then -- Reagan Youth, Nihilistics, Heart Attack, the Undead -- they were all Class Of '81. They came out about six months to a year after we did. Dates are a little difficult. But a typical night would be like, you'd be playing at A7 and this kid named Dave would come up and say he has a band and would you come and see them. And it'd turn out to be Reagan Youth.

I remember the day at A7 when I walked in and there were tons of flyers all over the place saying "What is A Kraut? It's more than a cabbage!" We're talking about a band that had a publicity campaign before they played their first note. And what was their first gig? Opening for the Clash at Bond's Disco! What was their second gig? A7.



The Young Prophet, 1982

Back then, I'd wear everything from a hard hat to a negligee. And people don't realize this, but the props we used to throw on stage, in the early days, I was more interested in throwing stuff at the audience than I was in singing. I'd throw anything, although my favorite was kitty litter. One night, Bobby Steele almost died because he had really bad allergies, and after the crowd had moshed all over the kitty litter, this cloud of dust rose up in the club and he had an asthma attack. He told me if I ever brought one little piece of kitty litter into a club again, he'd kill me!

actually had his hand on his revolver, ready to draw -- showed up and told us we had to stop. NOW. Do you think we stopped? NO! We kept right on playing, because we were a PUNK ROCK band. We were gonna start history off right here. But instead of shooting us, So our first critics had uniforms on, which I think was kind of auspicious.

On Starting A Scene.

The next thing to do was to find a place we could play all the time. We did the obligatory CBGB audition, that was November 25, 1980. I think we passed. But even better than that, we got invited to play Max's Kansas City... I remember it was Pearl Harbor Day, December 6. We played with the Violators and the Reactors, and we didn't bomb.

But we still needed a place to play all the time, because Max's was the big gig, the one you lived for. So I was walking along St. Mark's Place and bashed into this woman taking her garbage out. But like a gentleman, I picked up her garbage and apologized, and we got to talking, and she invited me for a drink. And I said, gee, it's kind of late, is there still anyplace open? And she took me to this sort of after hours bar she knew, which turned out to be the A7 Club. It was run by a guy named Dave Gibson. It was rehearsal studio, and he kept it open late, the beers were cheap. And so I asked him if he had ever thought about having a regular show.

Some of the bands that rehearsed there would play sometimes and have friends in, but they had never had a real show, with a cover at the door, and a whole thing going on. So Dave said, what kind of music you talking about? And I said, well, it's punk rock. Punk rock? he says. Yeah, I told him, it's kind of loud. So he goes, you don't have to break shit in here, do you? And I said, no, no we'll be cool. So we played, and we had such a good turnout for this thing at 2 bucks a head that Dave not only paid us, but he wanted us to keep doing it.

This is a story that's kind of gotten lost, like when New York magazine did their story on the history of punk in the City. I don't lay claim to too many things, but I do lay claim to starting A7. It's the truth. I booked the first couple weeks of shows, then I started booking shows twice a week, then other people got in on it. Then it kind of mutated, because I used to book, like, a punk band, a reggae band, and a pop band. But then it turned into this 10 bands, five bucks, kind of scene, and that's where the New York magazine article picked up on it. But that was really the end, it got so crazy that it didn't last long like that.

1980: The End Of The Punk Scene:

We were so weird, we could play anywhere. We played TR3. That was this sort of Joy Division scene. The Mudd Club would book us...that was a gig. It was like trying to be the party band in a Fellini movie. You'd go to the bathroom before the gig and there'd be somebody in there trying to grab your genitalia saying "I could take you to paradise," and I'm like, sorry, sir, madam, whatever, I gotta get on stage! My most vivid memory of the Mudd Club though was not a bathroom sex scene, but riding on my junkie bicycle, full speed to get to the club for some stupid reason, and mowing over a certain white-haired, bespectacled, Soho art legend millionaire by the name of Andy Warhol. And trying to be really punk about it. "Well, you're gonna die soon anyway Mr Warhol so what the hell?"

I was going through a lot of changes at that time too. Here I was trying to write about all this heavy stuff that was in my heart and soul, and yet I felt compelled to try and keep up with the Joneses. And in those days, that meant the Steve Joneses. I'm not lying when I say that in 1980, when Sid Vicious was doing his Max's Kansas City stint, I was one of the kids on the stoop, with the bottle of beer which we bought for our special guest, Cheeta Chrome was there as well, and a host of others you all know. They're all walking ghosts out there, these people I talk about. But I was the dumb kid who always had the pocket change that they could borrow. And boy, we were wrong, and we were young and stupid.

FALSE PROPHETS

by Jim Testa

The False Prophets released a new EP on Patatois/Cargo Records earlier this year, an unholy feat considering they were already an institution on the New York hardcore scene back when Jersey Beat started in 1982. For over ten years -- with intermittent hiatuses spent looking for new drummers -- the band has assaulted audiences with its unique mixture of punk, theater, politics and rant, and they don't show any signs of slowing down.

Lead singer/poet Stephan Ielpi has been the one constant in the Prophets' decade-long career, an observer and commentator who always has plenty to say. He's an interviewer's dream and an editor's nightmare; the only time he stopped talking during this session was when the tape recorder ran out of tape. So you wanna know what the hardcore scene was like in 1982, kids? Pull up a chair and we'll tell you all about it...

The Early Days:

You want to go ALL the way back? I was in a basement in Brooklyn and there was an acoustic guitar and a friend named George, and we were listening to Mott The Hoople and Bowie records, and we decided that maybe some of my lyrics were just as interesting, that we could make them into quirky songs. So we tried doing that first. We ran ads in the Voice and dragged people out of the woodwork, and one of them was Steven Wishnia [who'd stay with the band for ten years]. The first False Prophets was called Charred Remains. And then it went into Severed Vains, which we thought was so clever. And then I came up with a list of about 22 different names, one of which was the Dyslexic Prophets. And somebody said, where the hell did you get that from? And I said, I got it from the idea of a false prophet. And everybody said, "That's the name!"

But even before that, I was this 18 year old, slightly loudmouthed kid, and if you didn't want to listen to my poetry, I'd make you listen to my poetry. I was one of those park performers. Occasionally I was even ramblunctious enough to think it was good and I could pass a hat on it and make a little money. And some of the more earnest, church-going people in the crowd would get pissed and yell at me, just like they did in Life Of Brian, "False prophet!" So I was basically doing a rant revival in the middle of Washington Square Park.

We had six people at one time in these pre-False Prophets bands. Three of them could play and three of them couldn't, which we thought was in keeping with the idea of punk rock. The three who couldn't play splintered off, all because of one song called "Overkill," a 73-second song that was pretty fast for its time, and it separated the punkers from the junkers. So Steven Wishnia and a Peter Campbell went off with me and became the False Prophets. That was about May, 1980.

Anyway, we'd rehearse and friends would come to see us, but we didn't play a real show until we got invited to play at a block party on 5th Street, in a schoolyard. We were loud, we knew all of three chords, we were ranting about the problems of the world and the government, we were lucky enough to be playing right across the street from the 5th Precinct. Forty-three noise complaints later, a contingent of police officers -- one of whom, if I remember correctly,

Photo by Sam Lahoz



Have A Nice Decade

Has it really been ten years since the first issue of Jersey Beat?

As my friend Mick would say, Holy shit. It's been fun these past few weeks, going back through all the back issues and re-reading the little bit of rock 'n roll history that we helped put to paper. So much of it forgotten, so much of it still vivid... Putting together the ten-year staff box was a revelation -- as I'd go through old issues and jot down the names of people who wrote for the zine over the years, there were people I can't even remember, others I haven't heard from in years, and a few who have gone on to much bigger and better things (as I ceaselessly point out, The New York Times' Karen Schoemer started her journalism career right here in this zine).

God, what high hopes we had back in 1982 for the Hoboken scene. Back in those days, Maxwell's was just like Cheers, a place where you could go and everybody knew your name. Steve Fallon still booked the bands then, Ira Kaplan was the soundman; Walter Grater and the guys from the Phosphores worked the door and would let me in for half-price. Heck, three-quarters of the audience used to get in for half-price in those days, since everybody who went there was either a writer or in a band.

And the bands... The Bongos, the dB's, the Individuals, the Fclics... I had just missed out on the scene at CBGB's, catching the tail end of the punk scene. But by the time I saw the Ramones and Blondie, they were already signed to labels and well-known. At Maxwell's, back in 1982, we felt like we were on the ground floor of something that was going to be wonderful and huge, and change the sound of popular music.

And what happened? Not much. Where are they now? God. The Bongos, always my favorite band, had their 15 minutes of fame with an EP and an album on RCA, but never really clicked outside the Greater New York area. Richard Barone was recently dropped from MCA and is shopping a completed solo album around to labels. Rob Norris has left music; he is now a holistic massage therapist and practices in Hoboken. Jim Mastro has two good bands that can't get a record deal. I see Frank Giannini joggling through Hoboken sometimes.

The dB's? Chris Stamey released a solo album a few months ago on RNA/Rhino that sold about 11 copies. Peter Holsapple is, as far as I know, unemployed, at least until the next R.E.M. tour when he might get to play guitar with them again. None of the offshoot bands that emerged from the Individuals -- the Wygals, Rage To Live -- ever sold more than a few thousand records on small indie labels. Even the Fclics finally called it quits, and it seemed like they would be around forever. But earlier this year, Bill Million moved to Florida to join his dad's locksmithing business. Shit. Whatever happened to our revolution?



What's really ironic is that, besides the bands, the other component of the early Hoboken scene were the writers, especially the clique from New York Rocker. And it's those guys who have gone on to make something of themselves in the music business. Andy Schwartz is a bio writer at Epic Records, Michael Hill is a hot shit A&R man at Warner Brothers, and Glenn Morrow (aka Greg McLean) manages the Sweet Lizard illicit and owns a piece of Bar/None Records. But the biggest irony of all is that Ira Kaplan -- the biggest fan of that bunch -- went on to start Yo La Tengo, who have become the most long-lived and successful Hoboken pop band ever. In the last few months, they've been to Europe, toured the U.S., and released another album and an EP on a new label, Alias Records. Not bad for a guy who used to throw parties in his basement so he could play Morrells covers with Peter Holsapple and Jon Kiagos.

Just when the Hoboken scene started to peter out, Jersey Beat went into a big way, swept up with the 60's garage-rock revival that took over the New York club scene in 1984 or so. Those were great days, everybody dressing up, girls and guys actually dancing together, riding scooters, searching the junk stores for old paisley shirts. Sure, it was stupid, but it was a lot of fun.

And then, of course, the hardcore scene... Back when we started, if you wrote about hardcore at all you had to be a hardcore zine, because the pop (nobody said "alternative" back then, thank God) zines wouldn't touch the stuff. Adrenaline O.D. and the Buy Our Records crew, the straight-edge revolution in 1986 when Youth Of Today and the hooded sweatshirt crew took over, and more recently, the gonzo shenanigans at ABC No Rio... Lots of memories, lots of adrenalin, and lots of good people came out of the scene, no matter how often I'd kvetch about the violence and self-destructiveness of it all.

And there was so much more. All the clubs that came and went -- the old Peppermint Lounge on West 45th Street, grungy and grimy, and the "new" Pep that replaced, all hi-tech neon and chrome. The original Danceteria, with its trendy crowds and snooty doormen, and the little diner on the top floor. And out in Jersey, the Showplace in Dover, the godforsaken Dirt Club in Bloomfield, Mile Square City in Hoboken, Tuesday nights at The Jetty with Tiny Lights and Spiral Jetty...

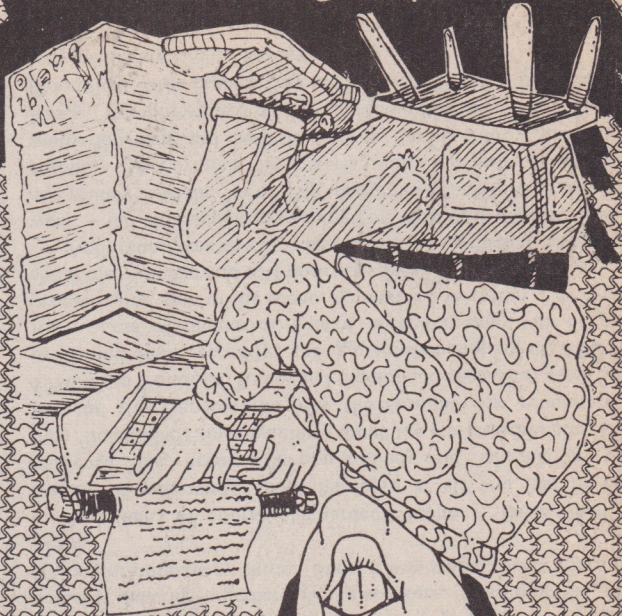
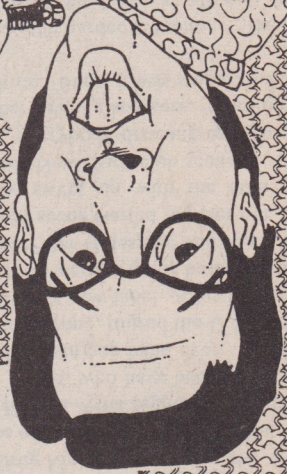
Oh what a long, strange trip it's been. Thanks for the ride. And there's lots of open road ahead of us still...



JERSEY BEAT



N.J.'s best?
(See P7)



Lyle Hyson, Jerry Eckhoff, Gary Cahill, Pat Clarke, Larry C.,
Pattie Kleinke, Howard Wuelfing, Bob Gelormine, Lee
Rosenstock, John Crawford, Ron Rimsite, Bruce Gallanter, Mike
Lydon, John Souchak, Cathy Miller, Don Goodman, Jim
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Bender, John D'Agostino, Dave Wykoff, Pete Snell, Mike Stark,
Paul Peaghe, Larry Grogan, Dawn Eden, Dave Run It, L. Cravat,
Andy Peters, Dan X MacKta, Chrs Friedrich, Cold-iron, Chrs
Francz, John Lisa, Karen Schoemer, Mike Alallo, Yost Levin,
Bruce "Sick" Boyd, Terry Telenko, Nick Barracato, Tami Morgan,
Mickey Melchiondo, St. Lords, Mark Fogarty, Mike Farrar, Nitti
Bah, Jamie Barrett, Carol Schutzbank, Ben Hogg, Tom Angeill,
Dave Best, Ben Weasel, Eddie Fishman, Jeff Vandercilute, Dirk
Bender, Ed Radich, Seven Wueffing, Ken Katkin, Tony
Rettman, Debbie Sager, Tom Brebhc, Ken Salerno, Debi Rotmil,
Michele Taylor, Bryan Davis, Danny Digia, Mike Lupica, Bill
Lutz, Johnny Puke, Pete Reilly, Shawn Scallen, Jodi Shapiro,
Sal Cannestra, Rod Leighton, Jamie Turner, Craig Donner, Mike
Harbin, Chrs Lawless, Alex Swain, Enk Szantai, Alan Baez,
Keith Gordon, Jerod Hanson, Lelf Hunneman, Frank Phobia, The
Platterpuss, Phil Schrader, Des Jr., Matt Gonzala, Matt
Shawkey, Danny Eldidge Jr., Dan Long, and to anyone we
forgot....thank you.

The Jersey Beat Staff
1982-1992

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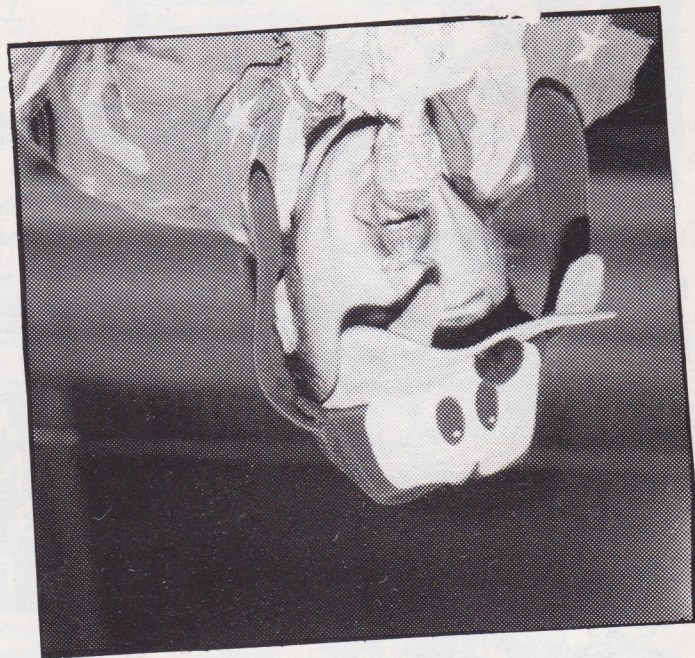
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TRUTH

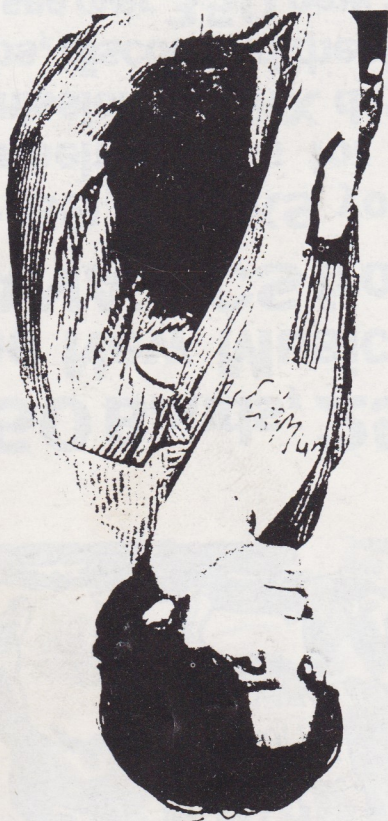
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